

**IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
COMMUNITY OF DJIDJA (WEST AFRICA)**

**GBENOU Victorin Vidjannagni**

Department of Sociology and Anthropology FASHS / UAC. Sociologist of Education  
University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin)

**ABSTRACT**

This research has studied the problem of education and local development in the municipality of Djidja.

The methodological approach adopted for this study is based on data collection, data processing and results analysis. The field work was conducted in four districts (Agondji, Djidja, Agouna and Houto) with 344 people in all categories as well as in the deconcentrated services concerned.

The results from the field surveys showed a wide range of educational problems, namely: a low level of access: 151 EPP, 19 Maternelle, and 12 CEG for 123542 inhabitants; absence of retention measures (follow-up, canteen, infirmary ...) leading to high rates of persistent drop-out (Primary: 13.15%, Secondary I: 12.66% and Secondary II: 27.35%). At the level of quality it was found: insufficient teaching materials, the lack of laboratory and a body of teachers mostly high school very low qualified (0.80% APE, 04.99% ACE, 94.21% Vacataires ) in the municipality of Djidja. However, education ranks second among the sixteen (16) development projects in the CFP.

**Keywords:** Djidja commune, education, teaching, local development

**Introduction**

"The resources that will make the riches of the world of tomorrow will come not from the fields, but from the factories, but from the works of the spirit." This prognosis, as set out in UNESCO's general report in 2000, reflects the need for world states to invest in education to ensure a future free from poverty and ignorance (Houedo et al. 2014). Education, then, is of paramount importance in the socio-economic development of all cities although these efforts are not at first sight tangible (Abbecy, 2011). It has become a fundamental right and an essential component of the development of nations (Baba-Moussa and Tonouewa, 2011).

Benin, like many countries, has included the reform of its education system and the achievement of Education for All (EFA) goals at the heart of its national development policy (UNESCO,

2007). These strategic choices are reflected in two (2) major flagship measures: the adoption of a Ten-Year Education Sector Development Plan (2006-2015) and free primary and primary education in all public institutions. in Benin (Thomas, 2015). Despite these efforts and the increase in aid by Benin's development partners in favor of schooling ..., the mid-term evaluation of the PDDSE as well as the institutional, organizational and functional audit of the education sector raised many malfunctions hampering the smooth running of the system (MEMP / MESFTPRIJ / MESRS / MCAAT, 2013).

The Municipality of Djidja is located in the North-West of the Zou Department (Central Benin Area) between 7 ° 10'0 " and 7 ° 31'0 " of latitude north and between 1 ° 39'0 " and 1 ° 39'0 ". ° 0 ° 13'0 " of east longitude. It is limited to the South by the communes of Abomey, Agbangnizoun, Bohicon and Za-Kpota, to the West by the Department of Couffo (Municipality of Aplahoué) and the Republic of Togo, to the East by the Commune of Covè and to the North by the Department of the Hills, the Municipalities of Dassa and Savalou (figure 1).

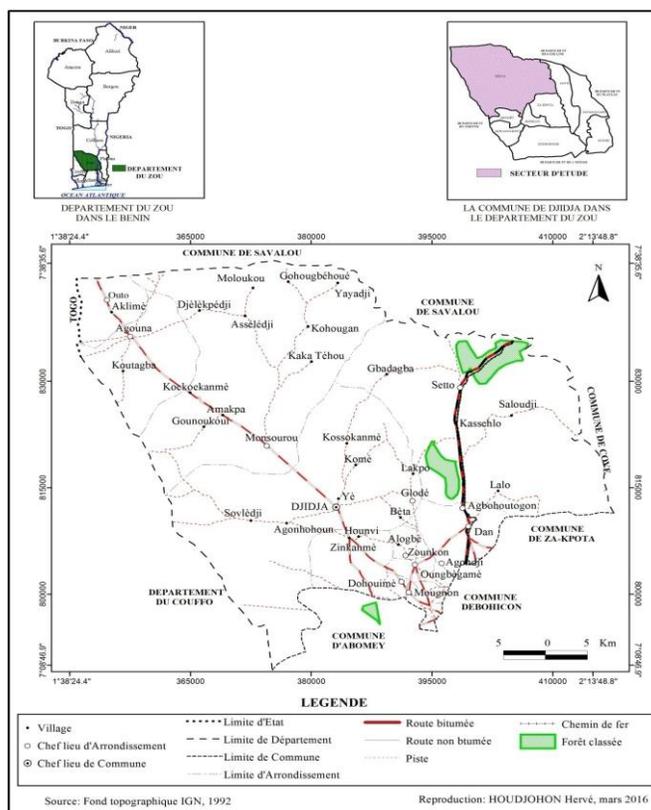


Figure 1: Geographical and Administrative Situation of the Municipality of Djidja

Administratively, the Municipality of Djidja is subdivided into twelve (12) districts. Covering an area of 2,181 square kilometres, it covers approximately 41.5% of the area of the Department of Zou (5243 km<sup>2</sup>) and thus represents the largest of the nine communes of the Department.

## **2. Materials and methods**

### **2.1. Data**

Quantitative data (number of students, number of furniture, classrooms, percentage of success, failure, abandonment ...) available in schools and qualitative data (teacher qualifications, appreciation of the role of education , living conditions of learners ...) with local actors.

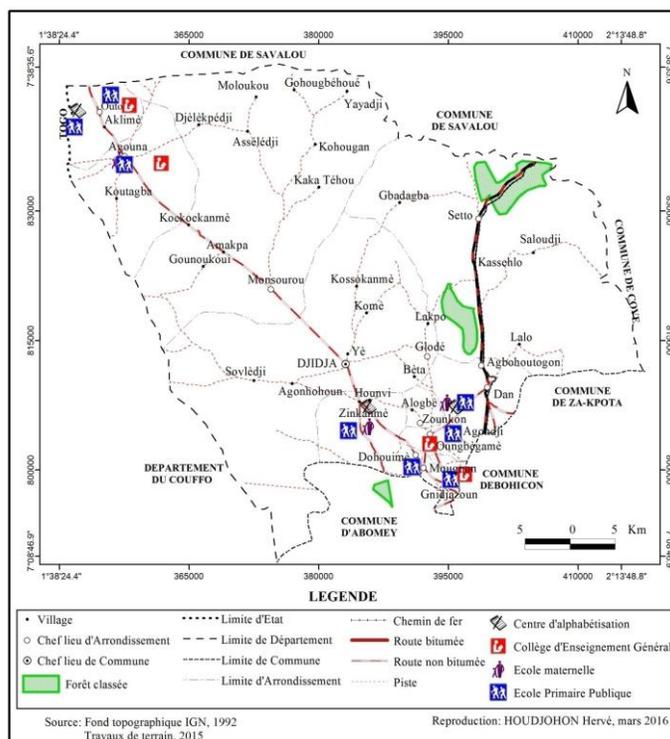
### **2.2. Sampling**

Reasoned choice sampling was done. Indeed, the municipality of Djidja covers 2181km<sup>2</sup> and according to RGPH4 (2013), 123542 inhabitants spread over twelve (12) districts and 79 villages in which are located various education centers. The study targeted 19 different types of education centers in 12 village categories with 344 different interviewees.

#### **2.2.1- Criteria of choice**

The four districts are chosen given their geographical position. Thus, Agondji borders with the big city of Bohicon. Djidja is the chief town of the Commune, Agouna is in contact with neighboring Togo and Houto is one of the chief towns of the most remote district of the town.

In each district three categories of villages are distinguished according to the availability or not of the centers of education: first category: village with nursery school (M), primary school (P), general education college (CEG) and / or no literacy center; second category: village with only primary school (P) and no kindergarten (M) and literacy center; third category: village with no formal education center



**Figure 2: Spatial distribution of the localities investigated in Djidja**

The analysis in Figure 2 shows the different villages visited during field surveys in the Djidja Commune. To carry out these surveys, several tools and techniques were used.

### 2.3- Method of analysis of the results

The analysis of the results was done using the SWOT analysis model. Indeed, the SWOT model is a model of analysis, originally used by Anglo-Saxon economists who found an effective technique for analyzing the management of economic entities (company or industry).

The model identified internal and external factors (physical, human and socio-economic) that influence the phenomenon under study. Internal factors relate to strengths / weaknesses and weaknesses while external factors are relevant to the opportunities and threats that affect the system being analyzed.

Identifying different factors helps to define an effective strategy that can maximize strengths and opportunities, minimize the impact of weaknesses and threats, and if possible transform them into strengths or opportunities.

Figure 3 shows the diagram of this model.

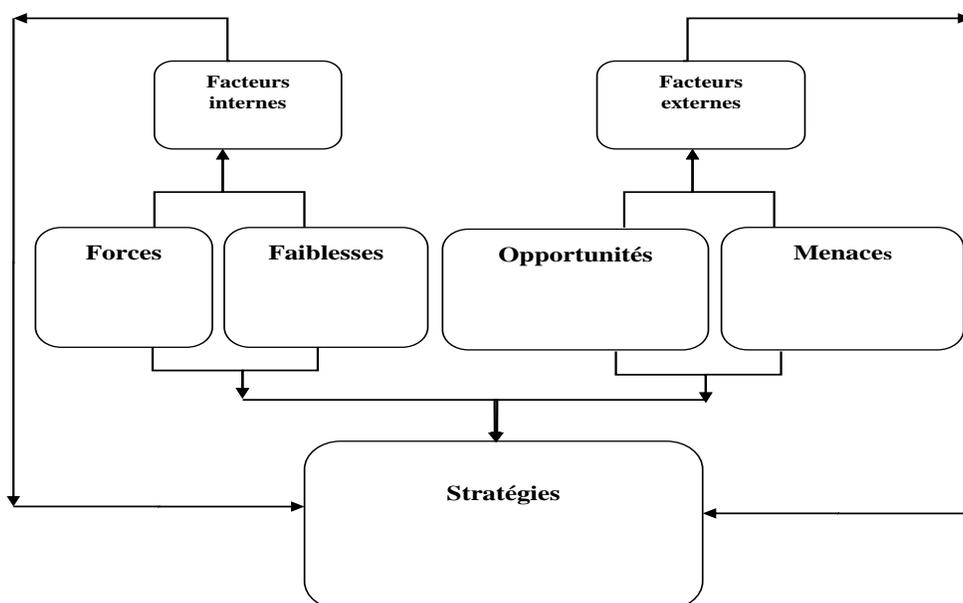


Figure 3: SWOT model, adopted for the analysis of the results

Source: Guth (1965)

The analysis of the results was done using the SWOT analysis model. Indeed, the SWOT model is a model of analysis, originally used by Anglo-Saxon economists who found an effective technique for analyzing the management of economic entities (company or industry).

The model identified internal and external factors (physical, human and socio-economic) that influence the phenomenon under study. Internal factors relate to strengths / weaknesses and weaknesses while external factors are relevant to the opportunities and threats that affect the system being analyzed.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1- Level of understanding of the role of education in local development by the population of Djidja Commune

A good assessment of the level of understanding of the role of education in local development by the population of Djidja Commune requires a minimum of knowledge on this theme and a criterion of appreciation of the elements of answer:

**Role of education**

**Table II shows the importance of education by subsector**

**Table II: Purpose of education by sub-sub-sector**

NIVEAU D'EDUCATION	FINALITE /IMPORTANCES
Maternelle	<b>Eveil et stimulation des fonctions physiques, psychologiques et mentales de l'enfant</b>
Primaire	<b>L'éveil de l'esprit de l'enfant, sa formulation physique, intellectuelle, civique et morale.</b>
Secondaire General	<b>Développe le sens de l'observation, le raisonnement logique et l'esprit de recherche</b>
Secondaire Technique et Formation Professionnel	<b>Donne un savoir-faire à l'apprenant</b>
Supérieur	<b>Assure l'élaboration, la transmission et la diffusion du savoir-faire et du savoir-être nécessaires à la maîtrise de l'environnement humain</b>
Alphabétisation	<b>Savoir lire et écrire. Informe sur les activités socio-économiques, la culture, la sante, l'hygiène, civisme et l'environnement.</b>

Source: Research Result, December 2015

The analysis in Table XI shows that the importance of education varies from one sub-sector to another. So, the more we study, we have the capacity to contribute to the development of our community.

It is on this knowledge base that the various perceptions of the populations were assessed according to the following indicators:

**Indicators and appreciations**

The respondent expressed at least 05 good roles - Very good

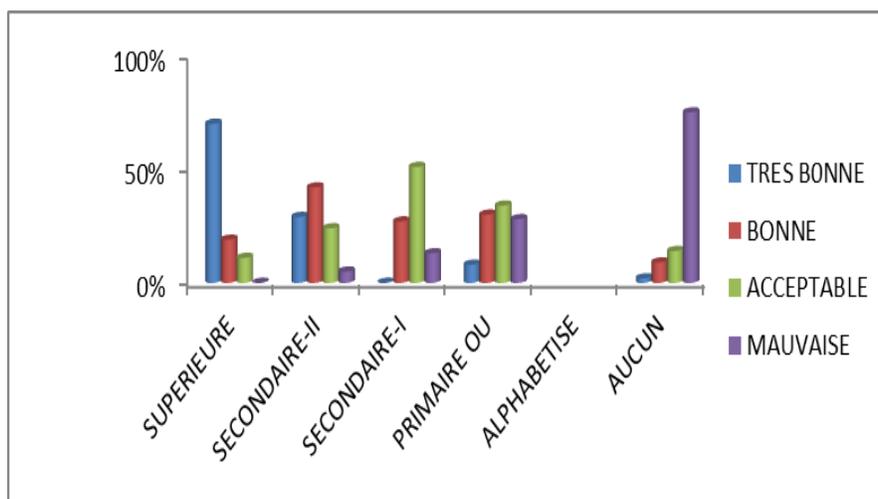
The respondent expressed 03 or 04 - good roles Good

The respondent expressed 01 or 02 - good roles Acceptable

The respondent did not express any - good bad

These criteria made it possible to appreciate the different perceptions of the Djidja populations on the role of education in local development. Figure 4 shows the level of schooling in the municipality of Djidja

**Figure 4: Appreciation of respondents' perception of the role of education in local development**



Source: Field Investigations, December 2015

The analysis of the figure shows that the proportion of respondents who gave very good answers is gradually evolving from the class of without instructions to the class of higher-level managers: (none 02%, primary or literate 08%, secondary-i 09 %, secondary-ii 29%, greater than 70%).

While decreasing continuously according to this order concern the wrong answers: (none 75%, primary or literate 28%, secondary-i 13%, secondary-ii 05%, higher than 00%). This means that the perception of Djidja's population of the role of education in local development depends on their level of education.

Also, Figure 7 shows us that the more we are educated, the better we understand the role of education. The peaks of the average ratings: good and acceptable respectively obtained at the level of the intermediate classes: secondary, primary or literate: (secondary-ii: 42%, secondary-i: 51%, primary or literate 34%) Confirms the link between the knowledge and level of education.

Indeed the perfect mastery of the role education requires a minimum of awakening that can only be acquired by education itself. So the primary role of education is above all: Training and

building human capital. As Philippe Hugon points out, it constitutes a multidimensional heritage "for humanity as well as for a national community or a community of base.

However, the poor appreciation of the role of education recorded in a significant proportion of educated people: (primary or literate 28%, secondary-13%, secondary-ii 05%.) in the municipality of Djidja; can be explained by employment problems, the quality of their training and the brain drain.

**3.2- Expectations of the populations and of the central state vis-à-vis education in the context of decentralization**

The various visions or expectations gathered from the various actors can be summarized in Table III:

**Table III: Summary of the expectations of the actors of education in the context of decentralization**

<b>Expectations of the central state</b>	<b>Expectations of the populations</b>
- Make education a tool for local development - Citizen participation in management - Support at the base by communities, educational problems that arise on their territory - Guarantee equitable access to education for all -	- Free education for all without distinction of age and sex - Rationalize and intensify the staffing policy for teaching materials and the construction of school infrastructures - Provision of sufficient schools, qualified teaching, administrative and control staff - Promotion of technical and vocational education - Equipment library schools, infirmaries, canteen, laboratory, computer room ...

Source: Field Survey, December 2015

The non exhaustive list of expectations shows that the population of Djidja hopes a lot of the state in the field of education. Unfortunately, with the decentralization, the Beninese State aims in turn the participation of the populations so that education is a tool of development at the base.

Thus the management of the education system is now done by the municipality through the transfer of competence according to the law 97-028 of January 15, 1999 on the organization of the communes which conferred a certain number of competences to the communes within the

framework of the management of primary and nursery education. This is the construction, equipment and repairs of public institutions of primary and nursery education.

These results constitute decision-making tools that can help local development actors in defining strategies for the effective development of the Djidja Communes.

**Figure 5 summarizes the analysis of the results of this study**

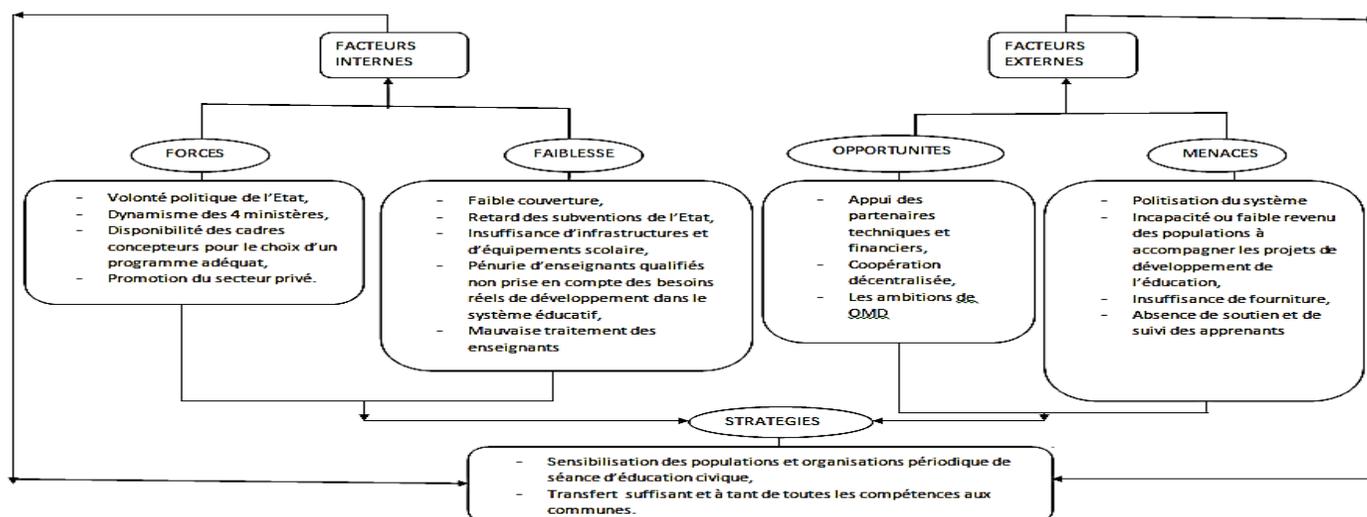


Figure 5: SWOT model applied to the analysis of education and local development in the municipality of Djidja., Source: Survey result, November 2015

Figure 5 summarizes the analysis of the results. Indeed, they boil down to the internal and external factors of education in the context of the promotion of democracy and local development at the grassroots level. They are respectively strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. All of these different factors were used for the analysis of education and local development in the municipality of Djidja

### 3.3- Importance of education in the local development process

#### • At the international level:

Jean-Claude Balmes' international education for all agenda mentions that retrospective studies of the different regions of the developing world have clearly established that growth can not be established in a sustainable way without sufficient prior capital production. human. Education is an engine of economic growth: it conditions the modification of social behaviors and modes of production, it is a source of productivity and competitiveness.

To this end, it is question to the different nations, to work for the promotion of an educational system meeting the expectations of the populations for the local development.

At the national level, the policy makers and technicians of the Beninese education system, with a view to achieving the Benin's development ambitions, have identified the skills-based approach (APC).

This program is an integrated model of teaching / learning / evaluation that is based on cognitivism, constructivism, socioconstructivism. It is then a question of forming today:

- an autonomous citizen, intellectually and physically balanced;
- a citizen respectful of the human person, truth, democracy;
- a citizen animated by a spirit of method, cooperation and a taste for responsibility;
- a citizen able to undertake, to take charge, to learn throughout his life;
- a citizen who manages himself, the environment and life situations in society ... (DIP, 2011)

### **3.3.1- Actions of potential actors of education in the face of different problems**

Donors in order to alleviate the difficulties of schools in Africa, focus on certain themes. These are not necessarily unanimous. There are divergences on the direction of the actions to be implemented. ASSIE-LUMUMBA (1993), feels this point of view then explains: "We think that by investing in certain themes, we could solve the problem. But in the field, these themes do not interest parents in schooling girls. It interests the donors .... The city council thinks that it is first necessary good working conditions, so the construction of school infrastructure. This is not enough to create access. The question of civil status does not have the same interest for the actors ". These projects raise the question of sustainability. The promotion of school canteens is thus used as an incentive for the schooling of children. However, there is a risk, denounced by some actors, of a return to the previous situation if the NGO redirects its action or leaves the municipality and / or if there is no parallel project to increase productivity and parents' incomes to compensate for the eventual departure of the NGO.

It should be noted that the problem posed by the "misappropriation" of local competences: international NGOs offer local experts working conditions and remuneration higher than those of the civil service. In this way, the administration sees elements capable of implementing the desired reforms and conducting a genuine national education policy.

**3.3.2- Development of an education at the service of local development in the municipality of Djidja**

**Improving education in the Commune requires the central state and local actors.**

**3.3.2.1- Recommendations to the State**

For an efficient education at the service of local development, the state must:

- ensure the development of education with the participation of municipalities and NGOs / TFPs, with a reinforced steering of the ministry especially aimed at the exchange of experiences between the actors involved and the capitalization of experiences.
- reinforce the management of the quality of schools by taking special care to improve the infrastructure and basic equipment, the qualification of the staff, the pupil-teacher ratio and the availability of teaching materials.
- Establish an effective referral system (encompassing both general secondary and technical) to achieve a more balanced distribution of students between streams, according to their abilities and country needs.
- Commit to respect the municipalities' competences in the construction of schools and provide them with the resources necessary for the exercise of these powers, in accordance with the decentralization laws.
- accelerate the contractualization of NGOs involved in literacy, so that the experimentation of the strategy of "make do" can finally begin and thus introduce a real change in this program.
- promote the establishment of school canteens and infirmaries to motivate schoolchildren and reduce school expenses for parents.
- develop closer cooperation between the central government and local authorities, schools, communities and families in order to facilitate the appropriation of the role of education in local development.
- Train and recruit qualified teachers in sufficient numbers.

**3.3.2.2- Recommendations for local or internal development actors in the municipality of Djidja:**

At the place of teachers and administrators of private institutions as public

- Take into account the needs of the learner in learning / teaching and constantly assess the learners' performance in an atmosphere of conviviality and mutual respect.
- Offer problem situations rich in creativity and inventiveness, while making the child discover the value of what he learns in a real life context and local development.
- Encourage the learner to be always active and to work in a team.
- Harmonize time use to avoid the perpetual reduction of learning hours
- Take into account the realities of the community and the needs of communities in the development of timetables and budget.

At the parents' associations

- Avoid any politicization of the EPAs by complying with the strict respect of the texts of the association since the election of its members.
- Play a facilitator role in the management of the school by objectively defending the cause of the students and the community at the grassroots.
- Sensitize the population to ensure the education of their children, both girls and boys, with a focus on monitoring and supervision.
- Strengthen the financial, human and material participation of communities in partnership with the State.

At the place of elected officials and communal agents

- Create district and village awareness and communication cells so that all girls and boys are in school. (Explain perpetually through these sessions: the place of education in the development of the locality) ..
- Advocate or lobby the State or TFPs to improve the quality of education in the municipality.
- Take into account educational issues in the development of the CFP, moving beyond limited decentralized educational skills to infrastructure.

For CSOs, economic operators and the rest of the population in general

- Get more involved in school monitoring for all boys and girls children.
- Limit and plan births to meet the needs of children.

- Create a light and operational structure capable of supporting the struggle for mass schooling of children.
- Participate in development actions initiated in the municipality and support the school,
- Work to curb rural depopulation, early marriages, child labor and child trafficking.
- Adopt participatory strategies and actions for the education of children.
- Create social stimulus and encouragement for students living in hamlets without school.
- Solicit and strengthen the literacy of older people in your localities.

## Conclusion

Knowledge is a fundamental element of all sustainable development. The intellectuals who are the depositories of this knowledge constitute a force of reflection whose opinion illuminates the community towards an ideal desired by all. The acquisition of this knowledge inevitably passes through education. It constitutes then, one of the essential tools in the realization of the ends of the society that is scientific, natural or traditional.

In the municipality of Djidja, notwithstanding the various actions of the State (the free education of girls generalized in high school this year 2015, the repayment and continuing training of contractors as a contract agent, frequent awareness sessions ...). The education system is still marked by a number of shortcomings and dysfunctions that are chaotic both in terms of accessibility to the various sub-sectors (nursery, primary, secondary and literacy) and in terms of quality and organization inside. of a cycle.

Faced with these obstacles, we note the passivity of most local actors except some sheets of sheet metal and cement packets given by a very small minority of politicians, CSOs or economic operators. Some kindergartens and primary schools admit to benefit from the intervention although insufficient of the mayor who in turn complains of the very limited financial resources transferred to her by the State.

In addition, ignorance or ignorance of the role of education in local development in the Djidja Commune is a determining factor in the crises that silently shake this key sector of development.

To alleviate this situation and promote the emergence of the municipality of Djidja through the development of education, we are certain that, the establishment by local authorities of good local governance and spirit of innovation in the mobilization of resources and communication-

awareness strategies, would make it possible to ensure the transparency of actions as well as the motivation of the population to democratic and civic participation in local development.

### **References**

Abbecy W. (2011): The question of schooling girls in rural areas. Case of the Commune of Djidja, ENS / Porto-Novo, 71 p.

Baba-Moussa A.R. and Tonouewa J. (2011): Educating city and school infrastructure management in the context of decentralization in Benin: Analysis of stakeholder strategies in the city of Porto-Novo, Porto-Novo, 23 p.

Houedo V. et al., (2014): Overview of Educational Reforms and Innovations in Benin from the Precolonial Period to the Contemporary Period, Media Library of Education, Porto-Novo, 156 P.

MEMP / MESFTPRIJ / MESRS / MCAAT (2013): Decennial Program for the Development of Updated Education, Cotonou, 231 p.

MEMP / MESFTPRIJ / MESRS / MCAPLN (2006): Decennial Program for the Development of Updated Education, Cotonou, 227 pages.

MENRS / CMC / MPREPE. (1996): Round Table on the Education Sector, Volume 1, Cotonou, 139 p.

MENRS / CMC / MPREPE. (1996): Round Table on the Education Sector, Volume 2, Cotonou, 83 p.

MESFTP (2010), Performance Report, Management 2009, April, 63 p.51- UNESCO / PLAN / UNICEF (2007): Proceedings of the National Forum on the Education Sector, Cotonou, 232 p.

Thomas O. (2015): Participation of populations in the development of municipalities, UAC, 84 pages.

UNESCO. (2000): Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 78 p.

UNESCO / UN, (1982): Conference Report on: Education and Endogenous Development in Africa paris, 32 p