



Research Paper

# Analysis of integration and teaching practices in rural areas of the commune of Malanville in the Republic of Benin

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## Summary

*This study aims to understand the difficulties of teachers and integration in rural areas of Malanville. To this end, data was collected from 100 teachers working in rural areas of the commune of Malanville. The main data collected relate to the characteristics of rural schools, the difficulties of integration, teaching practices, and the efforts made by various actors to support education in rural areas of Malanville. The analysis of the content of the speeches, the descriptive statistics made it possible to analyze the data collected.*

*My results indicate that schools do not have libraries. No computer center is available to allow teachers to print and multiply course materials. Most of teachers only have access to the internet through their mobile phones. Almost, all localities do not have access to power energy. In terms of electricity, my results indicate that the coverage rate of table-benches in the Commune's classrooms is around 38.70%, i.e. an approximate rate of 40%. This assumes that, out of ten (10) classrooms, only four (4) rooms have bench-tables for children. Through these different results, the results showed that the performance of primary schools in rural areas of Malanville is strongly influenced by the educational environment characterized by a lack of adequate infrastructure and poorly qualified and poorly supported teaching staff.*

**Keywords:** Integrations, education, rural areas, Malanville, North Benin.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an inherent right of every human being, a right acquired at birth for every child (ROCARE, 2011). The World Conference on Education held in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990, reinforced by the World Forum on Education held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000, went in the same direction concerning Education for All (EFA) by making basic education one of the main development priorities.

Education has immeasurable social and economic benefits. Indeed, individual attitudes and behavior towards the environment are to a very large extent a function of upbringing and more specifically of instruction. This allows the individual to master some knowledge and become aware of the challenges and risks associated with the environment (UNESCO, 2000). For all these reasons, it is therefore normal that the education of children holds the attention of public authorities in general and of development partners in particular.

In rural areas, teacher shortages are one of the main obstacles to the achievement of universal and quality primary education in sub-Saharan Africa (UIS, 2014). Several researches show that teacher shortages are generally greater in rural and remote areas. Two main reasons explain the scale of the problem. On the one hand, rural areas of sub-Saharan African states generally have the lowest enrollment rates (Mulkeen and Chen, 2008), which concentrates efforts to increase school coverage in these areas and induces an increase significant demand for teachers. On the other hand, rural areas face significant difficulties in attracting, recruiting and retaining quality teachers (Mulkeen and Chen, 2008; UNESCO-BREDA, 2009). Indeed, rural areas are geographically dispersed and sometimes cut off from each other by rivers and hills that are difficult to cross.

In Benin, structured formal education has commanded the admiration of the authorities since the 2000s, with particular attention to women. To this end, to the already free primary education for all has now been added the free education of girls at the secondary level. Despite all its efforts, difficulties persist in rural areas; because certain factors related to school life such as the absenteeism rate, the lack of academic reading skills (Van

Grunderbeeck et al., 2004) or the lack of teacher motivation (MEQ, 2002) affect the performance of schools in rural environment. According to UNESCO (2011), teachers in rural areas work in difficult conditions, exacerbated by low salaries, delay in payment of salaries and allowances and lack of promotion, scarcity of teaching and learning materials, the lack of consideration on the part of governments, parents and the community as a whole.

In Malanville, there are classrooms with up to 143 learners who jostle three or four on tables and benches, others on the floor to follow the lessons. Numbers vary from classroom to classroom. If the smallest number is estimated at 83, the CM1 class of EppTassiTedji, group C has 143 learners according to details reported by local radio.

There are also multigrade classes where a single teacher is responsible for leading two classes due to a lack of teaching staff. Added to this is the lack of electricity and adequate infrastructure in several localities.

Teachers claim that poor teaching conditions and reduced motivation affect their performance in the classroom and reduce students' ability to achieve satisfactory learning outcomes, thus reducing their ability to deliver quality teaching. Teachers feel neglected in the decision-making process and powerless in their efforts to improve the learning experience of their students despite their will and enthusiasm.

This study aims to highlight the particularities of the rural school as it exists today, before situating in this context the pedagogical practices of teachers and the problem of their integration in rural areas, through the case of the municipality of Malanville.

## **II. Methodology**

### **2.1. Study environment**

Located in the North of the Republic of Benin in the Department of Alibori, Malanville extends between 11.5 and 12° North latitude and between 3° and 3°6 East longitude. It covers an area of 3,016 km<sup>2</sup> including 80,000 hectares of arable land and is bordered in its width (East-West) by the Niger River with its assets for the construction of a coherent and viable economic regionalization. According to the RGPH4, the population of Malanville is 168,641 inhabitants with a density of 55.92 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>.

In Malanville, nursery education is not very well developed. Not all administrative localities in the municipality have a preschool education centre. In 2015, Malanville had only seven (07) nursery schools, three (03) of them were private. The total number of children is 622, including 317 boys and 305 girls. As for the supervisory staff, there are 9 instructors, 3 of whom are qualified. Of the five districts that make up the district of Malanville, only two have kindergartens: these are the districts of Malanville and Guéné.

The gross enrollment rate in preschool is 1.2% (RGPH4). This implies that out of 100 children aged 3 to 5 expected in kindergarten, only 1.2 children are actually enrolled. As regards the net enrollment rate, it is 1.1%, reflecting the fact that all children aged 3 to 5 who are actually enrolled do not completely complete the school year.

The gross enrollment rate at the primary education level in the district of Malanville was 38.2% in 2016 (RGPH4). This rate is lower among girls (35.2%) while among boys it is 41.2%. Regarding the net rate of school attendance, it is 25.8% for the whole of the Commune, including 24.1% for girls and 25.1% for boys. This gives a net gender parity index at primary level of 87.4.

In 2016, the district of Malanville had 73 primary schools, 12 of them were private. They are run by 275 teachers, 210 of whom are qualified (174 men and 36 women). There are a total of 292 rooms in permanent materials and 23 in precarious materials which house 17,460 schoolchildren (9,862 boys against 7,598 girls). Fifty-nine out of sixty-one (59/61) schools have school canteens (SME-FCB and CRS canteen) to promote the education of girls in particular and of all children in general (DDEMP Borgou/Alibori, 2016).

Figure 1 presents the administrative map of the town of Malanville.

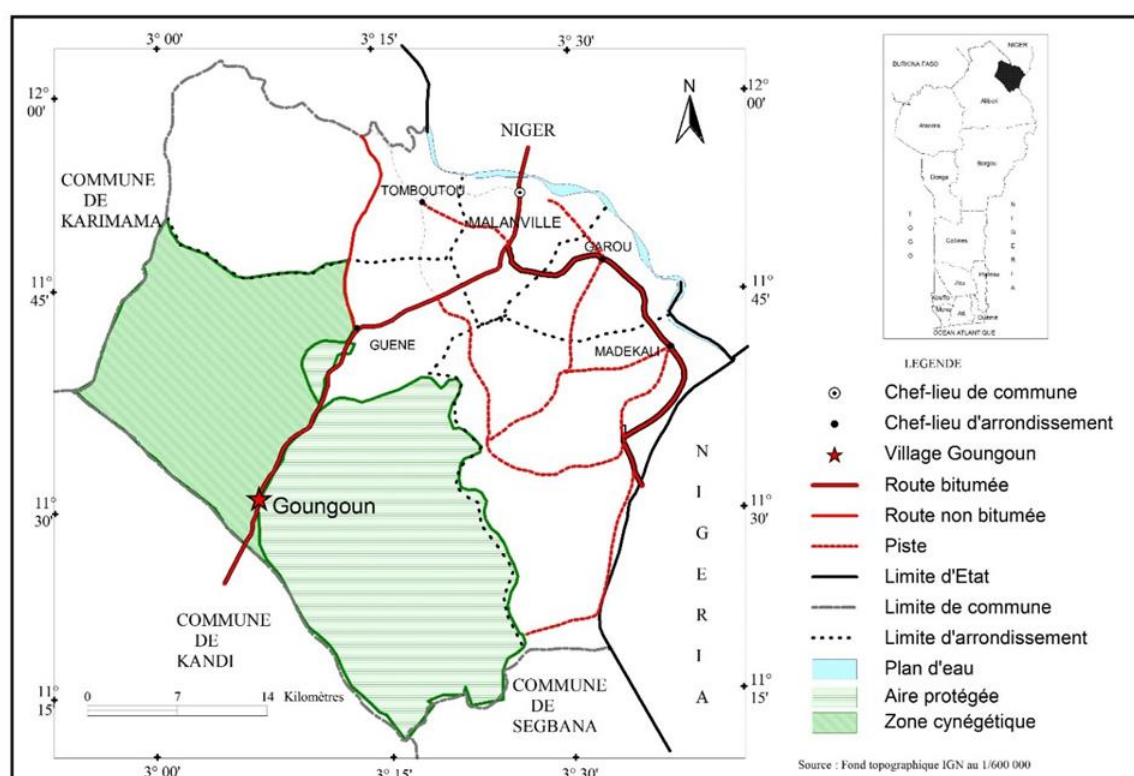


Figure 1: Location of the municipality of Malanville

## 2.2. Sampling

For a good representativeness of the sample, all five (05) town of Malanville were sampled. The unit of inquiry is the teacher taken. The sample size was calculated from the following statistical formula:

$$n = z^2p(1-p)/d^2$$

or:

**n** represents the size sought for the sample,

- **z** is determined from the desired statistical certainty. The chosen statistical certainty being equal to 95%, the corresponding value of **z** is equal to 1.96.
- **p** the prevalence or coverage rate to look for. For this study, **p** is equal to 0.5.
- **d** represents the desired precision. The value of **d** is determined by the margin of error we want to allow ourselves to have or by the precision we are looking for. In the case of this study,  $d = 0.1$ , that is to say that we allow ourselves a margin of error of 10%.

From the values defined above, the size "**n**" of the sample for this study is:

$$n = (1.96 \times 1.96) (0.5 \times 0.5) / (0.1 \times 0.1)$$

$$n = (3.84) (0.25) / 0.01 \text{ i.e. } n = 96.$$

For more details, 100 teachers including 9 school directors, proportionally distributed (according to the number of schools in the district) between the five districts of Malanville were surveyed. Schools and villages to target were identified during the exploratory phase. Table 1 presents the sampling details.

Table 1: Sampling

District	Locality	School	Sample
Garou	Fadama	EPP Fadama	7
	Monkassa	EPP Monkassa	5
Malanville	Malanville	EPP Malanville Quartier	18
	Kochi	EPP Kochi	8
	Golobanda	EPP Golobanda	6
	Malanville	EPP TassiTédji	14
Guéné	Koaratédji	EPP Koaratédji	10
	Goungoun	EPP Goungoun	5
	Boiffo	EPP Boiffo	7
Tombouctou	Molla	EPP Molla	9

	<b>Banloua</b>	<b>EPP Banloua</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Madécali</b>	<b>Sendé</b>	<b>EPP Sendé</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Kassa</b>	<b>EPP Kassa</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>

**Source : Author**

### 2.3. The research phases

The study was conducted in four phases:

#### 2.3.1. Preparatory phase

It is a phase of bibliographic research and exploitation of existing and available literature on the Beninese education system. During this phase, books, published articles and memoirs are consulted. The bibliographical research made it possible to build the main lines of the problem, to specify the objectives and hypotheses of research, to determine the methods of collection and analysis of the appropriate data; then to develop interview guides and questionnaires.

#### 2.3.2. Exploratory phase

It made it possible to make contact with the study environment and the resource persons and to better orient the different phases of the research, to specify the hypotheses according to the realities of the environment, to select and readjust the data to be collected, to choose the survey villages and constitute the sample.

#### 2.3.3. Data collection phase

This is the active phase of research. It consisted of data collection using questionnaires and interview guides corrected during the exploratory phase. During this phase, several interviews were carried out in order to have additional data related to the objectives of the research. Given that some questions require memory, participant observation and triangulation of information were used to verify the data collected. These are mainly data related to the management of classrooms, absenteeism, lateness, etc.

#### 2.3.4. Data processing and results analysis phase

During this phase, the data collected was recorded and processed. We checked their consistency and analyzed them. Descriptive analysis and discourse analysis were the main methods of analysis.

## III. Results

### 3.1. Respondent characteristics

#### 3.1.1. Marital status, age and level of experience of respondents

Table 2 presents the marital status, age and level of experience of respondents. The analysis of this table indicates that the majority, i.e. 84% of these teachers are married against 16% who are single. Among them, 72% are men against 28% who are women. However, it should be noted that more than half of married teachers live alone in their localities of intervention. This suggests that teachers in rural areas do not like residing in their workplaces with their families.

With regard to age, 42% of respondents are over 35 years old against 58% who are less than or equal to 35 years old. Teachers in rural areas are therefore relatively young in their majority. This could be explained by the fact that young teachers cope better with the difficulties related to living and teaching conditions in rural localities.

Since experience is often positively correlated with age, it follows that teachers in rural areas mostly (62%) have levels of experience of less than 5 years. Only 16% of them have more than 10 years of seniority in the profession. This suggests that policy makers prefer to keep experienced teachers in urban areas where enrollment rates are high.

**Table 2:** Marital status, age and level of experience of respondents

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Modalities</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>
Marital status	Maried/remaried	84%
	Single/divorced/veuf(ve)	16%
Age	More than 35 years	42%
	Less of 35 years	58%
Teacherexperience	1 to 5 years	62%
	6 to 10 years	18%

	11 to 20 years	16%
	Not more than 21 years	4%
Sex	Male	72%
	Femal	28%

**Source:** Survey data analysis result, January 2022

### 3.1.2. Profile of teachers and capacity building received

Table 3 presents the profile of the teachers and the capacity building received. The analysis of this table shows that those who have the CAP teaching diploma dominate in terms of numbers with a rate of 36%. They are followed by those who have the CEAP (28%) and the BEPC (22%) and who are mostly community recruits. There are also teachers with a university profile, with a rate of 14%.

Among them, only 10% are permanent agents; 36% are contract employees and 18% are aspirants. These three categories are those who have a minimum profile to exercise the teaching profession. They are recruited on objective bases, that is to say, either on the basis of their teaching diploma, or on the basis of accumulated experience or capacity building received. The others (36%) are community teachers who do not have the required profile. They are often unemployed middle managers or volunteers recruited by the community or by projects to make up for the lack of teachers in schools.

In terms of capacity building, about half of the teachers have never received in-service training. 42% have received a maximum of two training courses during their careers. Only 8% have participated in more than two trainings while in service. This highlights the poor policy of decision makers in terms of capacity building for teachers in rural areas.

**Table 3: Profile of teachers and capacity building received**

Variables	Modalities	Fréquences
Number of refresher training received in career	between 1 and 2 trainings	42%
	More than 2 trainings	8%
	No training	50%
	CAP	36%
	University degree	14%
	BEPC	22%
Teacher statut	Status of the teacher Permanent State employee	10%
	State Contract Agent	36%
	Teaching aspirants	18%
	Community teachers	36%

**Source:** Survey data analysis result, January 2022

### 3.1.3. Origin of respondents, professional mobility and social integration

Table 4 presents the origin of respondents, professional mobility and social integration. Of our respondents, only 9% are sons of the commune against 91% who left their region of origin to meet the needs of teachers in the town of Malanville. 61% were transferred from one rural area to another against 39% who left urban areas for rural areas. This last category most often has difficulty adapting to the way of life of the community and observes times of reluctance, mistrust vis-à-vis the community. Of all our respondents, 65% did not experience such easy access with the community; the socio-cultural, food and clothing realities of rural areas and especially of Malanville are different from their usual environment. Sometimes, religious differences are even sources of rejection suffered by teachers. It is easier for a teacher of the Muslim religion to gain the confidence of the parents of pupils, of the offices of the Association of Pupils Parents (APP), or of the Association of Pupils Mothers (APM) and even of some pupils. The constitution of working groups, which must be composed of the two different sexes, sometimes leads to comments; because for the community seems unorthodox according to social and religious norms and values. 75% of respondents admitted the impact of social integration on the quality of work provided by a teacher. They generally observe the delay in the progress of the class sequences, the gap of the learners, the heaviness in the reactions in class, the fear of working with a teacher who does not immediately appear to be theirs.

**Table 4: Origin of respondents, professional mobility and social integration**

Variables	Modalities	Frequencies
Origin (language)	Foreign	91%
	Local	9%
Professional Mobility (twice at least)	Urban to rural	39%
	Ruralarea to Rural areas	61%
Social integration	Easyaccess	35%
	Access no easy	65%
Impact on the quality of teaching Insignificant	Considerable	60%
	Littleconsiderable	15%
	no considerable	15%

Source: Survey data analysis result, January 2022

### 3.2. Description of educational conditions in rural areas

#### 3.2.1. The small size of teaching units and multigrade classes in rural areas

This characteristic concerns both the number of classes and the size of the classes (Figure 2). Indeed, more than 30% of classes have less than 15 students. The average class size is 18 students. About 24% of the schools visited have less than 3 classes.

About 13% of teachers manage multigrade classes due to lack of teachers and lack of staff. This is the grouping of students from two different levels in the same class with the same teacher in a double course.

However, in the Republic of Benin, the legislation only authorizes multigrade classes of the same sub-cycle called “twin courses” (CI-CP; CE1-CE2; CM1-CM2). However, we noticed two classes with courses belonging to different cycles. In general, the different forms of combinations encountered are the following: CI-CE1; CI-CE2; CP-CE1 and CM1-CM2. No grouping of three courses for a single teacher has been identified.

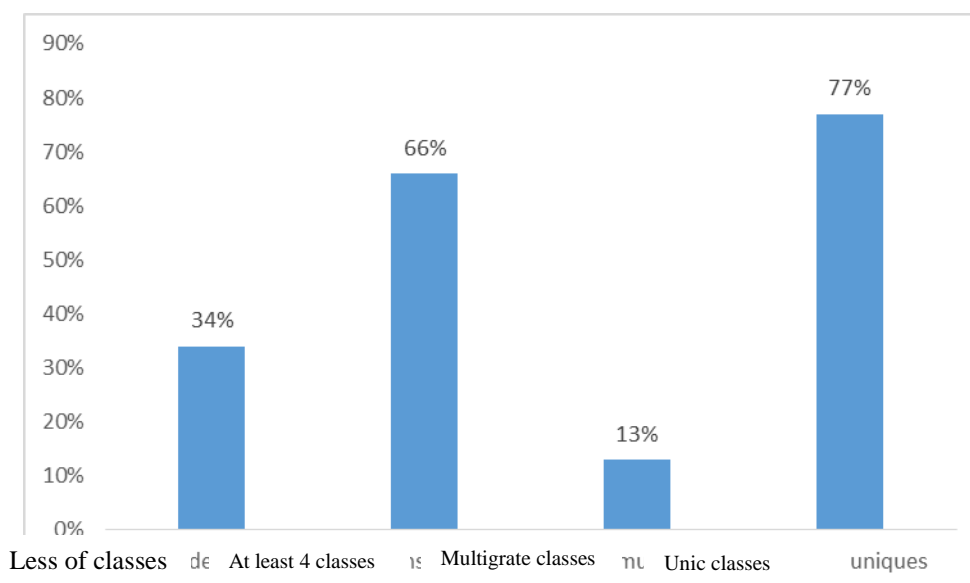


Figure 2: Situation of the classes surveyed

#### 3.2.2. Situation of overcrowded enrollment in schools in semi-urban areas

The semi-urban areas include the capitals of the districts or schools located in the heart of Malanville. Contrary to the findings related to the low numbers of schools in rural areas, the classrooms of semi-urban areas of Malanville have overcrowded numbers. For example, at EPP Garou B, CI and CP classes have 102 and 150 students respectively. The same classes have 170 and 164 pupils at the EPP Malanville Center A. For all the 3 schools of Guéné Center and that of Timbuktu, the lowest number in the CI and CP classes is 99. The largest number is encountered in the CE1 class in Timbuktu with 184 students.

This is due to the lack of teaching staff and partly exposes the difficulties of the teacher to convey the messages and to better provide supervision for each student present in the class; especially when you know that the national standard is 40 students for a master.



### 3.2.3. The educational environment in rural areas

Overall, rural areas are poorly or not at all equipped. Not all the schools visited have libraries. No computer center is available to allow teachers to print and multiply course materials. Only 12% of interviewees have permanent access to the internet through their mobile phones and 4% have access to electricity.

This situation due to the socio-cultural environment forces teachers to organize trips to the city and influences the pedagogical functioning.

In terms of infrastructure, our results indicate that the coverage rate of table-benches in the Commune's classrooms is around 38.70%, i.e. an approximate rate of 40%. This assumes that out of ten (10) classrooms, it is only in four (4) rooms that the children actually have bench-tables. This shows that all the conditions are not met to facilitate the learning process of learners in classrooms.

There are also several schools that have been built that are rarely attended due to lack of learners and/or teachers (Table 5).

**Table 5: Schools built but not attended**

Distric	Schools	Nombre
Guéné	Fiafounfoun	01
Malanville	Golobanda andKotchi	02
Garou	KambouwoTounga and Garoutédji	02
Madécalli	Sendé and Gouré Sendé	02
Toumboutou	Molla, Déguè-Déguè and Sakanwan Zénon	03
Total		10

**Source: Town Hall field surveys, 2016**

In terms of work tools, the lack of activity books is acute. For example, out of 791 planned learning booklets, 197 were served. The reason mentioned is that an error during the entry of numerical data. The committee would have inverted 1 of 7. Which therefore justifies this remarkable difference Teachers are sometimes forced to associate two to three children for a single document, because it is forbidden to ask parents for subscriptions for the multiplication of educational documents. This complicates the efforts of transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learners in these environments.

As for the buildings housing the classrooms, some are in totally dilapidated condition and do not meet EQF standards.





**Photo 1:** A classroom at the EPP Koualérou (Photo taken during the survey)

### **3.3. Teacher-community relationships and their influence on student education**

All the teachers interviewed maintain good relations with their host community. To achieve this, teachers generally go about the same way as with their students. According to Mr. K. E., teacher at EPP Koaratédji:

“I’m always willing to listen, explain and even help when needed. I use my free time to help children with their house exercises. I try to familiarize myself with the communities by providing support in terms of educational activities. I also make them aware of the importance of schooling. This is what makes it a little easier for parents to mobilize around their child's school work.

In addition, teachers participate in community activities in order to better integrate. Among other activities, we can cite the organization of a football tournament, the organization of competitions, the distribution of Impregnated Mosquito Nets with Long Duration of Action (MILD), awareness sessions or support for NGOs in local development. According to Mr A.A.

“The degree of involvement of the rural teacher in educational and cultural programs influences his decision to stay in his post”.

Therefore, retention requires coordinated school-community efforts. A school-community orientation helps new rural teachers overcome feelings of isolation and develop a sense of community safety.

### **3.4. Teaching practices in the rooms**

My focus group discussions with communities have shown that some teachers devote little time to teaching in favor of their private work, perhaps as a way to supplement their insufficient salaries. This situation is facilitated by the rarity of inspection visits by the authorities in charge of education in these environments.

The physical remoteness of many rural schools encourages absenteeism and extracurricular activities for many school officials. The need to travel to collect their salaries is one of the major causes of teacher absence. This can lead to an absence of up to three days, during which the school is deserted, abandoned to a single teacher responsible for maintaining order. Indeed, teachers’ salaries are paid into their bank accounts. But since there are no banks in their workplace, teachers have to travel long distances to collect their salaries. All of these are serious and severe constraints on classroom management and discipline.

The health problems of teachers in landlocked areas can also be a weak point in the control and discipline of teachers. A doctor’s visit that may take a day in an urban area may result in a teacher in a rural setting being absent for three to four days.

In addition to these observations, there is the phenomenon of early weekends, which consists of leaving the premises early on Fridays, to return there on Mondays in the afternoon. This is explained by the fact that teachers do not settle in their workplaces with their families.

### **3.7. Discussions**

My results indicate that schools do not have libraries. No computer center is available to allow teachers to print and multiply course materials. Most teachers only have access to the internet through their mobile phones. Almost all localities do not have access to electricity. In terms of infrastructure, our results indicate that the coverage rate of table-benches in the Commune's classrooms is around 38.70%, i.e. an approximate rate of 40%. This assumes that out of ten (10) classrooms, it is only in four (4) rooms that the children actually have bench-tables. Through these different results, the results showed that the performance of primary schools in rural areas of Malanville is strongly influenced by the educational environment characterized by a lack of adequate infrastructure and poorly qualified and poorly supported teaching staff.



In many countries, urban areas have qualified teachers who are unemployed or underemployed while rural areas have vacancies. This pattern of simultaneous surplus and shortage reported by Mulkeen (2005) suggests that the teacher problem in rural schools will not be solved simply by producing more teachers. Generally, the lack of qualified teachers in many rural schools is simply due to the fact that many teachers do not want to stay in rural areas due to social, professional and cultural isolation. Castle (1995), reflecting on the reluctance of teachers to work or stay in rural areas, argues that low salaries, lack of access to professional opportunities and the responsibility to take on multiple tasks are the major challenges facing teachers and influence their decisions to work or stay in rural areas.

In many countries, teachers express a strong preference for assignments in urban areas and this may be due to reasons, some of which have already been highlighted. The major factor could be that the quality of life in rural areas is not as good as in urban areas. Teachers expressed concerns about the quality of housing (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002), classrooms, school resources and access to leisure activities (Towse et al., 2002). A second major concern relates to health. Teachers may feel that living in a rural area entails risk of disease (Akyeampong and Stephens 2002) and less access to health care (Towse et al. 2002). They may also consider that rural areas offer few opportunities for professional advancement (Hedges 2000). In addition, teachers in rural areas are less likely to have opportunities to undertake other professional development activities. They also find it more difficult to have their rights respected by regional education administrations, sometimes to the point of facing obstacles or corruption from officials. The problem is further exacerbated in countries where the majority of new teachers come from a different background than the students. In Ghana, teachers tend to come from a particular socio-economic background, above the national average (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002) and come disproportionately from urban areas. Hedges (2002).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The various strategies carried out within the framework of the achievement of universal education in Benin have an impact on the schooling of vulnerable groups but have not been able to completely correct the disparities between urban and rural areas in terms of infrastructure and teaching staff. .

From my results, apart from the small size of classes and the existence of multigrade classes, rural areas are poorly or not at all equipped. Schools do not have libraries. No computer center is available to allow teachers to print and multiply course materials. Most teachers only have access to the internet through their mobile phones. Almost all localities do not have access to electricity. This situation due to the socio-cultural environment forces teachers to organize trips to the city and influences the pedagogical functioning.

In terms of infrastructure, our results indicate that the coverage rate of table-benches in the Commune's classrooms is around 38.70%, i.e. an approximate rate of 40%. This assumes that out of ten (10) classrooms, it is only in four (4) rooms that the children actually have bench-tables. This shows that all the conditions are not met to facilitate the learning process of learners in classrooms.

Through these different results, the results showed that the performance of primary schools in rural areas of Malanville is strongly influenced by the educational environment characterized by a lack of adequate infrastructure and poorly qualified and poorly supported teaching staff.

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