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Final Report

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Learning Initiatives for Rural Education in Senegal and The Gambia

Final Report
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Learning Initiatives for Rural Education

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This report will capture the approach, activities, and results of project LIRE. The organization of this report is as follows:

1. Executive Summary
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Executive Summary

Since August 2007, the Learning Initiatives for Rural Education (LIRE) project in Senegal and The Gambia has strengthened educators' capacity to deliver and support quality multi-grade (MG) education in rural areas with low population densities. In a truly collaborative approach, the LIRE project worked with 20 demonstration schools (13 in Senegal and 7 in The Gambia) to develop a teacher training manual and teachers' guide that was locally appropriate and in keeping with the curricula of each country. The LIRE team was truly international, with team members in Senegal, The Gambia and in the United States. The team met regularly in person, on Skype and over email to collaborate fully in developing each of the six training workshops, and the four sets of materials. In addition, the Team worked closely with a National Advisory Committee and Technical Working Group in each country, as well as local inspectors/cluster monitors and teachers. Indeed, consistent feedback from the workshop evaluations, the conference and the external evaluation was that this collaboration was a highly valued part of the LIRE project.

In addition to the trainings and training materials, the LIRE project undertook local and national advocacy activities surrounding multigrade education in each country. The project also developed a monitoring and evaluation toolkit, underwent an external evaluation and facilitated an international conference on multigrade education. Highlights from the conference and the external evaluation are detailed below.

Recommendations from the Multigrade Conference

Policy Recommendations

- Create a line on national budgets in Senegal and the Gambia to follow up the Multigrade
  - education initiative of the LIRE project: All countries have recognized the positive impact of the project because of the availability of MGC documents and the training.

- Continue sensitization for community members to better support the multigrade schools.
  Training material could be developed for teachers to better sensitize communities.

- Sign official MOU with ministries of education of Senegal and The Gambia
- Design and adopt evaluation tools to monitor multigrade students learning outcomes

- Make the project an independent body not depending on NGO: Open a separate account for the project and conduct activities on the field with local consultants and the ministry of education.

- Create a framework to share the tools with other countries involved in multigrade education.
• Include the LIRE materials on future national curricula of Senegal and The Gambia.

• Continue sharing the experience of Senegal and the Gambia: recommend the two ministries to develop a framework for teachers exchange visit and policy makers meeting to discuss and exchange policy experiences.

**Pedagogy Recommendations**

• Continue to build upon the community of practice that was developed through LIRE
  
  o The Gambia and Senegal want to continue teacher exchanges (TG P.S. welcomed it and told his officers to put in a request for it. He also granted open and direct lines of communication between Senegalese education officers and The Gambia).
  
  o The idea of creating an online site as a space to continue sharing resources was an idea from the Podor group of teachers and inspectors. Guinea has materials, such as self-instructional worksheets, that other countries would like to have and vice versa.
  
  o Podor has created a MG club to continue the collaborative efforts between teachers and as a means for M&E.
  
  o Guinea would like to have exchanges with Senegal and The Gambia to learn the MG programming

• Continue and expand trainings
  
  o The Gambia has continued to train cluster trainers who have been conducting step-down trainings for teachers. Senegal should do this as well.
  
  o Teachers in Senegal have been sharing resources with other teachers who were not part of the trainings. The trained teachers should assist in trainings. TGPS stated this would be a good idea as well.

• Provide opportunities to learn more about producing locally-made resources
  
  o Senegal wants an opportunity to learn more from The Gambia about the production and utilization of locally-made teaching resources.

**Conclusions & Recommendations from the External Evaluation**

In view of their social and economic realities, the Gambia and Senegal can not overlook multigrade education in their attempt to achieve universal education. From this point of view, the main concern can only be the question of proper management of multigrade classes: the training of teachers for best teaching practices, making resources available and the establishment of an effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation system.
The present evaluation of the LIRE project indicates that what we have achieved shows that hope is possible for quality education for all children. It is however necessary to take account of lessons learned, particularly in improving the system of monitoring and evaluation depending on the level of skill of actors and organizational structures in both countries. It is at this very level where development partners should support the school authorities to be able to move forward without aid, as students in multigrade classes who are able to work independently.

This multigrade system is contextually relevant and we must regret the absence of a systematic formalization of the project that would have improved the rigor and visibility.

**Summary Findings**

- **Overall, the project has achieved its specific goals. However, efforts can be made to improve the monitoring and evaluation.**
  - Gambian and Senegalese school authorities unequivocally affirm the relevance of the Project, which responds to their concerns to achieve quality education for all. This view is shared by other respondents such as the: Technical Committee, supervisors and inspectors, trainers, teachers ... The decision was also taken to institutionalize the Project in the Gambia.
  - All the respondents were satisfied with the results: documentation, training, the resources in place, the working environment, exchanges ...
  - The distributed tools and teaching techniques contributed to the improvement of teaching practices in multigrade classes.
Overview of LIRE

Since August 2007, the Learning Initiatives for Rural Education (LIRE) pilot project in Senegal and The Gambia has strengthened educators’ capacity to deliver and support quality multi-grade (MG) education in rural areas with low population densities. The LIRE project is funded by the World Bank-administered Bank-Netherlands Partnership Program and is implemented in partnership between the Center for International Education (CIE) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (the primary recipient) and the sub-contractor, the National Council for Negro Women-Senegal office (NCNW). The project was implemented in 13 schools in Senegal in the regions of Kaffrine, Podor, and Rufisque. There were 7 demonstration schools in The Gambia, in regions 5 and 6. In its efforts to assist the Education Ministries in Senegal and The Gambia in achieving the Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the LIRE project was committed to following objectives:

1. Identify local training partners and develop demonstration classrooms;
2. Develop and provide a package of training modules and teaching materials for multi-grade approaches to education for head teachers, teachers, and local training partners;
3. Develop and provide training in an action research approach for head teachers, teachers;
4. Provide technical support and guidance to head teachers and teachers in the demonstration classrooms; and
5. Assist local partners in the development of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for multi-grade education.

The following report outlines the participatory approach that the LIRE team and project participants engaged in to meet the above mentioned objectives.
1. The LIRE Team

The LIRE team was composed of key individuals at the Center for International Education (CIE) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst; the National Council for Negro Women (NCNW) through its Dakar office (the sub-contractor); In-Country Coordinators in Senegal and The Gambia, In-Country Trainers, and members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) and National Advisory Committees (NAC) of both countries.

- **At UMass:** Two faculty members from CIE: Professors Jacqueline Mosselson (PI) and Gretchen Rossman (Co-PI); one UMass doctoral student who served as On-Campus Coordinator: Alicia Fitzpatrick; and four UMass Master’s or doctoral students who were training and curriculum advisors; Sarah Kahando, Rebecca Paulson, Karla Sarr, and Paul Frisoli. Paul, Karla, Rebecca, and Alicia are all Returned Peace Corps volunteers who served in West Africa, with extensive experience in teaching and teacher training in Francophone or West Africa. Paul, Karla, and Becca are fluent in French. Paul and Alicia are Pular speakers (the language of one of the participating groups; the Fulani) and Karla is a Wolof speaker, the dominant local language of Senegal and The Gambia. Sarah is from Kenya with extensive experience in teaching and teacher training in Kenya and South Sudan.

- **In Senegal:** LIRE Program Director, Dr. Mbarou Gassama Mbaye, with the National Council for Negro Women (NCNW) and In-Country Coordinator for Senegal: Mr. Yaya Diatta. Representatives from key education agencies and members of the Ministry of Education who serve on the National Advisory Committee (NAC) and the Technical Working Group (TWG) were also members of the LIRE Senegal team. The members of the TWG and NAC are identified in a following section.

- **In The Gambia:** In-Country Coordinator, Ms Emily Sarr; Omar Baldeh and Nakulang Ceesay were the lead trainers throughout the project. Representatives from key education organizations and Ministry served on the NAC and the TWG. The members of the TWG and NAC are identified in a following section.
2. Activities in Senegal & The Gambia

After completing a needs assessment in Senegal and The Gambia, three areas of foci were identified as critical components of a comprehensive effort to improve educators’ capacity to deliver and support quality MG education. The three areas were training of teachers, head teachers and inspectors/monitors; resource production of Multigrade training manuals and teachers’ guides in both countries; and advocacy at both the community and national levels.

Building a community of practice among the participants was an overall goal aimed at supporting a change in professional behavior through the trainings and resource production. Therefore, all activities and approaches were purposefully crafted to facilitate an environment conducive to ‘building’ a community of practice.

Action research was the approach taken to design, implement, and reflect on activities. The theme of community of practice was reinforced through the action research cycle: for example, teachers learned from each other and created knowledge together during the trainings and teacher to teacher exchanges. The specific activities are described in detail below.

2.1 Needs Assessment

**Senegal**
The following summarizes findings from the Senegal needs assessment.

**Content Resources (Training)**

- The Inspectorate of Podor makes use of qualified, engaged, motivated, and well-equipped human resources to carry out multi-grade teacher training. Not only are there inspectors who understand the important role of multi-grade classes in the education system, but there are also experienced teachers called MAF (trained facilitator-teachers) who provide young teachers with technical advisory support in multi-grade classrooms in rural areas.
- The principals of the five targeted schools have not received training therefore are limited in their abilities to provide technical support to their teachers. They are, however, eager to participate in this pilot project.
- With the exception of the principals, no teacher from the targeted schools has benefited from specific training beyond the supervision of their principals, of the MAF, or from exchanges in the pedagogical training clusters. However, it should be noted that during the initial training they receive at the Teachers Training Schools (EFI), they are exposed to general notions on multi-grade classes, which they consider as far insufficient.
- With the exception of text books, which rarely cover all the needs, the teachers receive no resources related multi-grade teaching from the government. With the support from NGOs, the IDE has been able to provide multi-grade teachers with sample self-guided study materials as well as Multi-grade Class Guides which they would like to see improved with the support of LIRE.
- A synthesized document on multi-grade and some sample self-guided learning materials were provided to the needs assessment team.
Perceptions of Multi-Grade

- The inspectors, principals, and teachers of the targeted schools understand the issues of multi-grade classes in the context of educational development in rural areas, even though teachers still have a preference for mono-grade classes and both teachers and principals point out that, as currently implemented, multigrade classrooms are a significant burden in workload for teachers: “We are practically washed up at the end of the school year, the allowances we receive are not worth the work load” said a teacher.

Community

- According to the teachers interviewed, the communities are little interested in the schools (they are nomadic herders, farmers in the valley or migrants); most don’t have any particular opinion about multi-grade classes. As long as there is a school canteen and the teacher does not miss too many classes, they are satisfied.
- Only in one school does the head of school develop strategies to involve the communities, although not as educational resources. The communities are assisted in preparing concept papers to present to support organizations or they participate in the canteens management committees.
- This witnesses lack of adequate community involvement strategies in most of the schools.
- One parent stated, “If we have classes and teachers for each level, others may not have the same, even though we would prefer one class with on teacher for each level, we think that multi-grade classes can help children access schools.”

Identified Pedagogical Needs
The training needs are clearly identified by the teachers:

- Pedagogical strategies in the multi-grade classroom;
- Creating self-directed learning materials;
- Educational theory;
- Core issues of multi-grade;
- Administrative management of a multi-grade class;
- Classroom organization; and
- How to create a course plan for a multi-grade class.

The Gambia
The Needs Assessment study was to determine the needs of the schools selected to participate in the LIRE pilot project. Five schools (at the onset, there were five, but later there were seven in total) were selected throughout regions 5 and 6. Emphasis was placed on the most deprived regions in the country with visible teacher shortages where there are existing schools engaged in multi-grade teaching. The study assisted in mapping appropriate techniques and strategies to address inherent gaps and challenges. The methodology was as follows:

1. Data Collection in five schools using specially designed tools that look into classroom practices, teacher profile, school /Community links, and available school resources and observation of the teaching and learning process.
2. Interviews were conducted with school administrators Supervisors and Regional Directors
3. Snap shots of classroom captured on camera
4. Focused group discussions with Communities on Multi grade
5. Interview with Policy makers the PS, Gambia College head and Curriculum and SQUAD
director
6. Report Writing

The following conclusions resulted:

Content Resources (Training)

- In terms of training needs all but one had received training in multi grade. Nafugan and
  Kerr Sait the head teacher and Deputy Head were handling the multi grade classes due to
  teacher shortage and were therefore the only qualified teachers.
- Three out of five teachers observed said they prepare lessons plans, one said sometimes
  and one never. Those that prepare lessons prepare it for different grades unwittingly
  adopting a quasi mono grade approach.
- Multi-grade classes were combined in one classroom facing either side of the room. The
  teacher introduces the days topic to one class, gives them assignment and proceeds to the
  next class on a different subject.
- Due to lack of skills and pedagogic training the teachers are unable to adapt the curricula
  to multi grade teaching. Only one teacher in Pallen, who has had some training,
  possessed such skills.
- Support to multi grade is provided by the DOSBSE and the cluster monitors who are in
  direct contact with the schools. Cluster monitoring takes the form of visits to schools and
  making a general and in most cases casual observation about the school and lessons and
  offering verbal advice. The fact that such comment are rarely written down for effective
  follow up renders this method of monitoring inefficient. Except for one monitor in
  Region 6, cluster monitors lack knowledge, skills and competence in multi grade and
  therefore fall short of being able to address problems relating to classroom practice and
  pedagogy. From the perspective of monitors, multi grade teaching can work provided the
  necessary support in terms of teacher training and all other needs, are met - including
  incentives for teachers. According to the monitors, incentive remain a key factor and
  indicated that the reasons why teachers prefer hardship zones was the opportunity it
  provided them to sign “three vouchers “ i.e. the hardship allowance, double shift and a
  regular salary. Their perception of the situation was that ‘it’s all about incentive after all.’

Illustrative Quotes

- “I prefer mono-grade teaching to multi grade as learning is much more effective in
  mono grade classes” ....Hella Kunda
- “The idea of multi-grade teaching should be thrown away” .... Nafugen
- “Multi grade teaching is not a good way of teaching and learning because learners find
  it difficult to understand the teacher” ....Maka Ali Sarr
- “Multi grades are difficult to deal with. Mono grade teaching are better. Mono grades
  get learners to understand better” .....Pallen
- “Makes work hard for the teacher” .......... ..Kerr Sait Maram
- Key constraints highlighted include: the notion that multi grade teaching was too
  demanding and tiring, and that teachers lack the skills to teach multi grade overall.
  Interestingly enough all of the teachers, despite complaints of an inherent “difficulty” in
teaching multi grades, have said that they would be willing to take it up if incentives were available.

School Community Links

- In all the schools visited, except for one in region 6, the school is reported to have existing cordial relationship with the community. The community actively participates in school activities. They render support when it comes to school garden, fencing and provide financial and in kind support. In KERR Sait Maram the community built a teachers quarters for the school.
- The Mothers' club emerged as the strong link between the school and the community, ensuring environmental cleanliness and good health of pupils. With proceeds from their labor, the clubs contribute cash to go towards meeting the needs of school such as stationery or minor repairs. Their potential and power in helping increase community awareness and acceptance of multi-grade cannot be overlooked.
- Community opinion on the teaching of multi grade was similar across the board. All the communities except Kerr Sait Maram deem multi grade teaching “difficult” and inferior to mono grade.
- In Maka Ali Sarr the difficulty is attributed to teachers' lack of proper training in handling the classes. They also saw a prime disadvantage to be that there is always an element of biasness for teachers may choose to pay more attention to a particular class at the expense of the other.
- In Pallen multi-grade teaching was said to be an imposition from the government which people feel too powerless to oppose.
- Communities alluded to the notion that schools are no longer providing quality instruction because of teaching of multi grade.
- In Hella Kunda, the Village Alkali dominated the discussions and refuted the explanation that multi grade classes were a necessity and had more to do with teacher pupil ratio and low enrolment. It was reported that children were being withdrawn from school and there was refusal to send them to the school as the community described children not being able to even spell their names when they terminate at grade 6. This perception of the failing school system was blamed on multigrade education.
- What was evident from the discussions was that despite the situation, they will continue to support the school as long as children were attending school. They however express continued hope that in future situations will improve and that their schools will progress and move beyond primary to basic cycle schools allowing their children the opportunities for continued education close to home.

Identified Pedagogical Needs

There were the following gaps in skills acquisition:
- Lesson plan preparation
- How to rearrange the syllabus for multi grade teaching
- Classroom management and techniques

The LIRE Multi-Grade Monitoring & Evaluation toolkit includes a comprehensive needs assessment framework and tools for collecting baseline information at the community, classroom, and national level. The tools that were used in the Senegal and The Gambia Needs
Assessment are components in the toolkit and can be used and/or adapted for future MG education purposes.

2.2 Technical Working Group and National Advisory Committee

Technical Working Groups (TWG) and National Advisory Committees (NAC) were created at the onset of the project to ensure full participation, ownership among the stakeholders to build towards sustainability, and to design and implement project activities according to the unique needs of the countries. The NAC represented the MOE, therefore, the adoption process of the materials was ongoing. The NAC reviewed and provided feedback on the material development and the in-country coordinators and/or TWG would implement the feedback. The TWG identified the demonstration schools, designed the training content and M&E tools, and created the content of the teachers' guide in collaboration with the UMass team. There was ongoing exchange between the UMass team and the in-country teams to share, revise, and modify content and format of materials. The in-coordinators were the facilitators of this process. The process was lengthy; however, TWG members of both countries commented that they “owned” the material. Some were members of NAC and TWG committees in the past for other projects and felt as though the committees were more of a symbolic gesture, but this project was different as a result of this ongoing back-and-forth working process. Below are the members of the NAC and TWG of both countries and summaries of meeting dates and outcomes.

Senegal

National Advisory Committee

The National Advisory Committee was formed and held its first meeting on 6 May 2008. Members were identified by Education officials from the Ministry in consultation with Mr. Yaya Diatta (LIRE Senegal In-country coordinator). The committee was comprised of the following members:

Djibi Ndiaye Diouf, Director of Education Planning and Reform (DPRE)
Abdou Diao, Director of Elementary Education (DEE)
Cheikh Diakhaté, Director of INEADE
Adama Diouf, Director of Human Resources (DRH)
Mame Bousso Samb, President of FAWE, President of the National Committee of Female Teachers for Girl's Education
Abdou Aziz Niang, ActionAid Representative
Gorbal Sy, President of the National Coalition for EFA
Bakary Badiane President of the Federation of Student Parent Associations.
Representatives of the URE project

Summary of meetings

6 May 2008
LIRE In-Country Coordinator (ICC) introduced LIRE project activities. The committee approved LIRE’s objectives (they were in align with those of PDEF). Demonstration schools were approved. The Minister of Education chaired the meeting and committed support on LIRE activities, especially the resource productions.

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27 October 2008
Review and update of progress. Professor Jacqueline Mosselson (PI), Sarah Kahando and Alicia Fitzpatrick were in attendance and were able to meet with the members.

17 February 2009
The committee reviewed, finalized and accepted the content of the teachers’ guide and training guide.

Technical Working Group
The Technical Working Group was formed and convened on 6 May 2008 for the first time to discuss its purpose and modus operandi. The group was comprised of the following members:

- Abdou Diao Director of Elementary Education (DEE)
- Ndéye Khady Diop (DRH)
- Cheikh Diakhaté, Director (INEADE)
- Mor Mbengue (DEE)
- Amadou Abdoul Sow, Coordination Nationale de la Formation Initiale et continuee, Ministère de l’Education
- Mandione Mbengue (DEE)
- Amadou Bey Sy (DEE)
- Modou Fall, Inspector of the department of Podor
- Papa Matick Hane, Inspector of the department of Podor, Focal point
- Gaston Sangharé, Inspector of the department of Mbaké
- Ousmane Samb, Inspector of the department of Rufisque II
- Ahmet Kébé, Inspector of the department of Kaffrine
- Abdoulaye Gning, Inspector of the department of Kaffrine, Focal point
- Representatives of LIRE
- Ablaye Dia, Resource person
- Rahim Gaye, Resource person

Summary of meetings
6 May 2008
The group identified its purpose as being the technical advisors in the development and design of training and materials, including the m&e tools such as the classroom observation tools and the needs assessment tools. Planned for a 2-day workshop in Thies to begin work.

23-24 May 2008
The MG classroom observation tool was verified for testing. The outline of the MG teachers’ guide was developed. The outline of a training manual was developed.

27 October 2008
Review and update of progress. Professor Jacqueline Mosselson (PI), Sarah Kahando and Alicia Fitzpatrick were in attendance and were able to meet with the members.

17 February 2009
The committee reviewed, finalized, and accepted the content of the teachers’ guide and training guide.

The Gambia

National Advisory Committee
The NAC was convened and held its first meeting on 22 May 2008. The members were:

- Mr. Baboucarr Buoy – Permanent Secretary DOBSE
- Mr. Yunis Hydara – Director PCU
- Mr. Matarr Baldeh – The Coordinator EFA
- Miss Isatou Ndow – The Head of School Gambia College
- The Deputy Permanent Secretary (Technical)
- Mr. Mohammed Jallow – The Director Planning Directorate
- Mr. Momodou Samneh – The Director Basic Education

Summary of meetings
22 May 2008
The P.S. introduced LIRE project activities. The committee approved LIRE’s objectives and pledged support. The P.S. of DOBSE began the meeting with a statement in which he pledged support and provided the goals of LIRE.

December 2009
Reviewed the draft forms of the teachers’ guide and training manual.

22 January 2009
Reviewed the draft forms of the teachers’ guide and training manual. Emily then incorporated their suggestions/feedback into the resources.

Technical Working Group
The Technical Working Group was convened and held its first meeting on 13 June 2008. The following members are:

- Mrs. Isatou Nyang – CREDU
- Mr. Nakulang Ceesay – GAMBIA COLLEGE
- Mr. Ousman Bah – CREDU
- Mr. Baboucarr Suwareh – REGION 5
- Mr. Momodou Jeng – SQUAD
- Mr. Paul Kariaka Mendy – PLANNING UNIT
- Mrs. Emily Sarr – LIRE

Summary of meetings
13 June 2008
Selected the 5 demonstration schools. Components of the Needs Assessment were identified and a proposed travel itinerary for the study. The Deputy P.S. began the meeting with a statement of support and gratitude among its members.
19 June 2008
Finalized the draft tools for Needs Assessment study; teacher observation guide, teacher profile, school/community links, classroom mapping, description of schools, student observation guide and questionnaire for policy makers (please note, these tools are included in the LIRE MG M&E toolkit). Full-day working session.

29 July 2008
The development of the teachers’ guide was initiated. Training and monitoring schedule was finalized. Dates for a 5 day materials development workshop were set.

18 August 2008
Training manual was revised. Review of teachers’ guide format. Began designing a classroom observation M&E tool to monitor and assess teachers’ progress in implementing MG practices.

19-23 August 2008
Curriculum of the training and teachers’ guide was reviewed. Training schedule and content was designed and planned. Intense curriculum workshop with members.

19-21 December 2008
The training manual and teachers’ guide was reviewed and revised. The content, format and grammar were the areas of focus. Plans for the finalization process were established and agreed upon.

March 2009
Reviewed and revised the training manual and teachers’ guide. Emily then incorporated their suggestions and made appropriate changes based on their feedback.

2.3 Community Sensitization and National Advocacy

Senegal
Below are highlights of community sensitization and national advocacy activities in Senegal.

Community Sensitizations
National advocacy and community sensitization activities began to take place during the fourth quarter. In October, team LIRE, the inspectors of the respective regions, and participating teachers held community sensitizations in all of the communities with demonstration schools. The entire team introduced LIRE goals and objectives, benefits of MG education and project activities, including the school-site grants. The communities appeared to be very accepting. Rich discussions took place between the community members in regards to multi-grade education.

At the end of January 2009, the LIRE team visited the schools and communities again to investigate the community perception of the LIRE project and multi-grade in general. The LIRE team with local inspectors visited the schools and met the following participants:
- Rufisque 2, two schools: Niaga Peulh and Ndiakhirate Peulh. Three teachers attended the focus group; there was no community meeting, nor an inspector meeting.

- Podor, three schools: Wouro Mabrick, Diofunde Dially, and Nguendar. 7 teachers, 3 inspectors and about 60 community members attended the different meetings.

- Kaffrine, four schools: Sahm Ngueyene, Diamagadio, Ndiayene Waly, and Gainth Boye, 13 teachers and 6 inspectors, and more than 140 attended the different meetings.

Overall, more than 200 community members, 23 teachers and 9 inspectors attended the meetings. The following are the findings from focus group discussions with community members:

**Supportive of the MG Initiative**
- Overall, communities, inspectors and teachers found that the project LIRE has a positive impact on teachers and students.
- Communities appreciated the school grant, which helped start classes on time and brought closeness between the school and the community.
- Overall, community members perceived multi-grade as a positive model although they were reluctant in the beginning because they were used to seeing monograde classrooms.
- The interest of the community in the school activities has increased students’ interest in the school.
- Some community members support the model because of the seriousness and dedication of children, of teachers, the grant, and the learning outcomes.
- However, in Kaffrine some parents were still negative because they could not understand how a teacher can teach two grades levels, they were waiting for the outcome at the end of the year. They still think that they need more teachers to help their children better learn.
- “I really see the positive outcome of the model, teachers are very motivated and I do not know why. May it be the result of their training? I don’t know. I am very happy with what I have seen so far in the school. I decided to transfer my children from a school in Dakar [the capital city] to Nguendar [Podor] because of the positive impact of this model on students learning. Often, personally, I come and sit in the classroom to see what children are learning and I congratulate the teachers. We are very happy with the LIRE project.” (Community member in Podor)

**Impact of the school grant**
All communities visited confirmed that they received the grant, which was managed with transparency. It was mainly used to buy school supplies, pay volunteers for after school class, buy teachers training materials such as books, erasers, students note books, teachers’ cards, pens, dictionaries, slates, geometry materials, books to prepare students for the national examination etc. In Kaffrine part of the money was used to sensitize other villages to send their children at school because access is still an issue in some villages. This has encouraged many parents to send their children to school on time.
The school grant has a positive impact, we are very happy with the project LIRE, we did not have to buy notebooks this year [amoul djeun cahier at bi]” (community member Kaffrine)

The school grant has a positive impact because it makes possible the opening on time. Teachers and students had their supplies on time” (Community member Kaffrine)

The Role of the Media
The media reported on all of the trainings that took place. There was a press conference with a national radio station in Podor on 11 October 2008 with team LIRE and the inspectors of Podor. The team discussed the goals and objectives of LIRE, the benefits of MG education and shared some of the project highlights, including the success of the teacher trainings. The release was for the national audience. Other forms of media included radio announcements and newspaper articles. The Senegal team was even interviewed on national TV.

The Gambia
The complete report is attached in the appendix. Below are the highlights.

Community Sensitizations
Based on the needs assessment, community sensitization campaigns were scheduled and implemented between 15-17 September 2008. These efforts focused on the communities of all 7 demonstration schools and took place in Kossemar, Hella Kunda, and Nafugen –in Region 6, and in Pallen, Maka Ali Sarr, Baatr Ndarr and Ker Sait Maran -in Region 5. Concurrent sensitizations were conducted in communities during these same days. In the communities in Region 6, approximately 110 village heads, members of mother’s clubs, religious leaders, teachers, and community leaders participated in the sensitization activities. A VSO volunteer also participated. Cluster monitors led some meetings; members of the LIRE team conducted others. LIRE team members participating were Emily Sarr, Mbarou Gossama-Mbaye, and Rebecca Paulson. These meetings were extremely important in engaging community support for multi-grade.

The team listened to the community members’ concerns about multi-grade and gave examples on how a class with many grades could be taught. There was a noticeable change in attitude when the comparison between the multi-grade schools and the Darras were made. This example helped to further iron out perceptions and misconceptions. The Darras contain multiple grades and mixed ability groups in a single class taught by one Koranic teacher who systematically works out a way of giving all pupils equal instructional time and without sacrificing quality.

The team members from Senegal and the United States of America spoke of multi-grade initiatives in their countries and examples were drawn from other parts of the world such as Norway and Scotland. Listening to foreign experiences by foreign speakers also brought in a sense of realization that did not exist at the start of the discussions. Subsequently, there was an air of understanding that multi-grade was practiced even in well- to -do and developed countries. What also was discussed was the government policy on pupil teacher ratio as a key determinant.
This argument served to buttress the point that it is entirely within the power of communities to reverse the trend through increasing the school intake.

The benefits of multi-grade were highlighted. Whereas in two of the communities there still remained some apprehension, in five of the 7 visited, there was overall acceptance of the following and hence the recognition that multi-grade could be a viable form of teaching.

**Meetings with Top Ministry Officials**
The meetings with top Ministry officials and officials from likeminded organizations such as EFA and Action Aid International served to open up dialogue on multi-grade that enabled Ministry officials to gain understanding of community views and underlying perceptions that influence attitudes on multi-grade. The fervent support of top officials was enhanced by interest shown by the Permanent Secretary as a crucial person in attaining success. Regular feedback sessions either via electronic mail or through the Department of State for Education (DOsBSE) focal point helped sustain his interest. The outcomes of such meetings are the hallmark of advocacy efforts and revealed the level of commitment of the DOsBSE towards multi-grade. The body of information that emerged from the LIRE survey was useful in sending signals to the policy makers that communities know their problems well and can articulate them when given the chance. Top officials felt it provided enough food for thought and would help in addressing appropriate strategies but also based on the recognition that, in Education systems, choices have to be made. Decisions are largely influenced by availability of resources. In the PS’s own words “multi-grade is not only an administrative necessity in the Gambia but an *absolute necessity*”.

The PS decided to continue the activities of multi-grade after LIRE to ensure other segments of the country benefit from the programme. Such a decision largely stems from the view that DOsBSE had—even before the inception of the LIRE—identified multi-grade as a key area needing improvement and contributed to the improvement of quality.

**The Role of the Media**
The involvement of the media in LIRE activities helped heighten advocacy efforts and placed multi-grade in the public domain. It is the right of the public to be informed of issues that shape their development. LIRE Gambia worked hand in hand with the media to ensure training sessions and workshops were covered by major newspapers in the country and national radio. The *Daily Observer* posted two articles in its paper which covered the training sessions Given that such articles were posted in the internet made it reach a worldwide audience. The fact that enquiries about the progress of multi-grade were raised at the level of parliament in The Gambia reveals a consciousness that has been awakened and government’s interest.

**2.4 Trainings and Resource Production**
The resources produced by the LIRE initiative are a comprehensive teachers’ guide and companion the training manual in both Senegal and The Gambia, in both French and English (thus there are eight documents). A comprehensive M&E toolkit was also produced and is discussed in a later section. It has been approved by both Ministries and the World Bank and will be widely disseminated, including on the website of the Center for International Education at UMass: [http://www.umass.edu/cie](http://www.umass.edu/cie). All documents are available from CIE or the World Bank/Senegal.
The training content was determined from the findings of the needs assessment by the members of the TWG of both countries and the UMass team.

**Senegal**

*Trainings*

In Senegal, the training programs, sequence, and activities, were determined by Yaya Diatta and the UMass team. Weeks before a training took place, Diatta would send UMass an initial draft of the training program. The UMass team would then contribute to the program. Paul Frisoli, the UMass lead trainer for Senegal, would meet with Diatta in Senegal and they would collectively complete a final training program.

Trainings took place in October, November, and December, 2008. The training team trained for three days at Podor and then for three days at Kaffrine (the Rufisque participants traveled to Kaffrine). The participants of the trainings included: MG teachers, head teacher, and inspectors. Consistent with the principles of multigrade, the team determined that all training events should model best practices in multigrade. A few days before the trainings convened, Diatta and Paul met with the Inspectors and encouraged them to lead or co-facilitate sessions in which they had some experience. Due to the MG experience in Podor, inspectors were more apt to contribute, as well as the inspector of Rufisque.

The following table illustrates the trainings conducted, the participants, content and dates.
## Summary of MG Trainings in Senegal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training 1</th>
<th>Training 2</th>
<th>Training 3</th>
<th>Training of Trainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dates &amp; Location</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dates &amp; Location</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dates &amp; Location</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dates &amp; Location</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6-8/Thies</td>
<td>October 9-11/Podor October 13-15/Kaffrine</td>
<td>November 13-15/Kaffrine November 17-19/Podor</td>
<td>November 26-27/Thies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Introduction to Multi-Grade 2) Curriculum Planning and Adaptation (scheme of work) for MG 3) Development and Use of Self-Instructional Materials</td>
<td>1) Curriculum Planning and Adaptation (scheme of work) for MG and development and use of Self-Instructional Materials 2) Classroom organization and management MG instructional strategies</td>
<td>1) Monitoring, assessment and evaluation 2) Creating resources from local materials and community as a resource 3) Micro-teaching</td>
<td>1) Introduction to MG 2) Benefits of MG 3) MG instructional strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target Group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target Group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Target Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 teachers, 3 inspectors and 2 directors were trained. These were all from the 3 participating regions (Podor, Kaffrine and Rufisque).</td>
<td>11 Teachers &amp; 3 inspectors/Podor 17 Teachers &amp; 6 inspectors/Kaffrine &amp; Rufisque</td>
<td>13 Teachers &amp; 3 inspectors/Podor 17 Teachers &amp; 6 inspectors/Kaffrine &amp; Rufisque</td>
<td>22 Trainers EFI 3 IDEN 1 ANCTP 1 Dir. du Project de Vol. Ed. 1 MEN/DRH 1 CNFIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trainers/Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Trainers/Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Trainers/Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Trainers/Support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Trainers:</em> Yaya Diatta &amp; Darren Hertz  <em>Support:</em> Mbarou Gassama-Mbaye &amp; Ashley Clayton</td>
<td><em>Trainers:</em> Yaya Diatta &amp; Paul Samb  <em>Support:</em> Mbarou Gassama-Mbaye &amp; Alicia Fitzpatrick</td>
<td><em>Trainers:</em> Yaya Diatta, Mr. Samb (Rufisque inspector) &amp; Paul Frisoli</td>
<td><em>Trainers:</em> Yaya Diatta, Mr. Samb, Mr. Fall, Mr. Sanghare, Mr. Sow &amp; Paul Frisoli  <em>Support:</em> Mbarou Gassama-Mbaye, &amp; Gretchen Rossman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resource Production

Training Manual
A training guide was produced in a collaborative effort between the UMass team, the in-country coordinator, the TWG and the NAC members. As previously mentioned, the content was determined by the TWG, using the initial findings from the Needs Assessment. The training guide includes the trainings that the LIRE team designed and implemented as well as other additional resources, as cited in the manual.

Teachers’ Guide
The content for the teachers’ guide was also determined, as previously stated, by the TWG and NAC members in collaboration with the UMass team. Yaya Diatta held meetings with the TWG group and work/review the teachers’ guide and then send it to UMASS for editing. UMass would send it back to the TWG group to provide feedback and they would sent it back with comments, which UMass would incorporate. This back and forth process occurred several times until the final product was approved by all members and then adopted officially by the Ministry of education in June. Below is an outline of the content of the Senegalese teachers guide:

Introduction

Module 1: Purpose and Background of Multigrade Teaching
   Unit 1: Multi-grade Classrooms (MGC) in Senegal and Around the World
   Unit 2: Causes of MGC Failure and Conditions Necessary for Success
   Unit 3: Relevance and Effectiveness of MGCs

Module 2: MG Classroom Management Tools
   Unit 1: MGC Organization and Layout
   Unit 2: MGC Schedule
   Unit 3: Self-Instructional Materials (independent activity worksheets)
   Unit 4: MGC Schemes of Work

Module 3: MG Classroom Management Techniques
   Unit 1: Skills of the Multi-grade Teacher
   Unit 2: Whole Group Instruction and Breaking-off
   Unit 3: Alternation and Independent Work
   Unit 4: Tutoring, Pairing and Mentoring

Module 4: Community as a Resource
   Unit 1 Local Resources
   Unit 2: School as Community Resource
   Unit 3: Community as School Resource

Module 5: Monitoring and Evaluating Student Learning
   Unit 1: Monitoring and Evaluating Student Achievement
   Unit 2: Various Student Learning Evaluation Methods
The Gambia

Trainings
In The Gambia, the training programs, sequence, and activities were designed in collaboration with Emily Sarr (LIRE ICC), Omar Baldeh (Gambia Trainer), Nakulang Ceesay (Gambia Trainer), and the UMass team. Similar to Senegal, Emily would send UMass an initial draft of the training content. The UMass team would then contribute to the program. Rebecca Paulson, the UMass lead trainer for The Gambia, would meet with Omar and Nakulang in The Gambia and collectively they would complete a final training program.

Trainings took place in October, November, and December, 2008, for three days in Janjanburegh, The Gambia. The participants of the trainings included MG teachers, head teacher, cluster monitors and trainers. As in Senegal, the training activities modeled best practices in multigrade pedagogy.

Also like the Senegalese format, the trainings were designed using the action research cycle/experiential learning cycle. The activities were designed to find out what the participants already know and do in regards to the content, then build from what they know (often facilitated by experiential learning activities and working together), and then applying and/or demonstrating their learning. The work produced during the trainings is included in the teachers’ guide that was produced through LIRE.

The following table illustrates the trainings conducted, the content, dates, and participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates/Location</th>
<th>Training 1</th>
<th>Training 2</th>
<th>Training 3</th>
<th>Training of Trainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>September 17-20 Janjanburegh</td>
<td>October 23-25 Janjanburegh</td>
<td>November 27-29 Janjanburegh</td>
<td>March 1-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Content       | 1) Introduction to MG  
2) Curriculum Planning and Adaptation  
3) Developing an M&E tool  
4) Validating the teachers’ guide | 1) Curriculum Planning and Adaptation (scheme of work) for MG and development and use of Self-Instructional Materials  
5) Classroom organization and management  
6) MG instructional strategies | 1) Monitoring, assessment and evaluation  
2) Creating resources from local materials and community as a resource  
3) Micro-teaching | 1) Training of Teachers’ guide and training manual  
2) Overview of MG  
3) Overview of Training content |
| Target Group  | 13 Teachers  
5 Cluster Monitors  
3 Cluster Trainers  
7 Headteachers  
2 Regional Staff | 14 Teachers  
5 Cluster Monitors  
3 Cluster Trainers  
7 Headteachers  
2 Regional Staff | 14 Teachers  
5 Cluster Monitors  
3 Cluster Trainers  
7 Headteachers  
2 Regional Staff | 23 cluster monitors, cluster trainers and teacher trainers from the teachers college |
| Trainers/Support | Trainers: Nakulang Ceesay, Omar Baldeh (lead) & Rebecca Paulson  
Support: Emily Sarr, Mbarou Gassama-Mbaye | Trainers: Nakulang Ceesay, Omar Baldeh (lead) & Rebecca Paulson  
Support: Emily Sarr, Mbarou Gassama-Mbaye & Alicia Fitzpatrick | Trainers: Nakulang Ceesay, Omar Baldeh (lead) & Rebecca Paulson  
Support: Emily Sarr & Alicia Fitzpatrick | Trainers: Nakulang Ceesay and Emily Sarr |
Resource Production

Training Manual
A training guide was produced in a collaborative effort between the UMass team, the in-country coordinator, the TWG and the NAC members. As previously mentioned, the content was determined by the TWG with using the initial findings from the Needs Assessment. The training guide includes the trainings that the LIRE team designed and implemented as well as other additional resources, as cited in the manual.

Teachers’ Guide
The contents for the teachers’ guide was also determined, as previously stated, by the TWG and NAC members in collaboration with the UMass team. Emily Sarr would hold meetings with the TWG group and work/review the teachers’ guide and then send it to UMass for editing. UMass would send it back to the TWG group to provide feedback and they would send it back with comments, which UMass would incorporate. This back and forth process occurred several times until the final product was approved by all members and then adopted officially by the Ministry of education in June. Below is an outline of the content of the teachers guide for The Gambia:

Section 1: Introduction to MG
1.1: Definition of MG
1.2: MG in The Gambia
1.3: Benefits of MG
1.4: Challenges of MG
1.5: Multiple Roles of the Teacher

Section 2: Curriculum Adaptation and Planning
2.1: Definition of Terms
2.2: Harmonization of Topics
2.3: Timetable in MG Schools
2.4: Scheme of Work
2.5: Lesson Plan

Section 3: Teaching Approaches and Strategies
3.1: Teaching Approaches
3.2: Teaching Strategies

Section 4: Classroom Organization and Management
4.1: Classroom Management
4.2: Key Aspects of Classroom Management

Section 5: Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation
5.1: Monitoring
5.2: Assessment
5.3: Evaluation
2.5 Teacher-to-Teacher Exchanges

Three teacher-to-teacher exchanges occurred throughout the LIRE initiative. The intent was to create a community of learning in which teachers could continue utilizing each other as resources outside of the training sessions. It is also a method used to encourage a change in professional behavior, i.e. to promote the implementation and sustainability of learned content from the trainings. Teachers were encouraged to share practices and lesson learned, as well as an opportunity to observe their colleagues in “action” to provide feedback and to learn. Below is a detailed explanation of the exchanges that occurred.

**Teacher Exchanges Senegal**

In November 2008, all teachers participated in a teacher exchange within their regions. Teachers felt it was extremely beneficial. They were given time to process the event during the subsequent teacher training. They said that they felt that the exchanges or “cluster meetings” were extremely beneficial to provide support to one another in MG and to continue implementing and practicing the pedagogy they learned during the trainings.

**Teacher Exchange The Gambia**

A teacher exchange occurred in November 2008. All participating teachers in Region 5 traveled to Region 6 and spent a day observing teachers in their classrooms. They then met to discuss observations, challenges, and strategies. Teachers discussed their reactions during the subsequent November training.

**Teacher Exchange between The Gambia and Senegal**

In March 2009, 20 teachers and education officials from Senegal and The Gambia participated in the teacher exchange between Senegal and Gambian LIRE participants. The Senegalese teachers and inspectors traveled to Janjanburegh, The Gambia, and joined the regional participants for two days of collaboration, building upon the community of practice. The LIRE In-country coordinator for The Gambia and the Regional director hosted the exchange.

After an initial opening ceremony consisting of prayers and introductions, the group observed two classes at two of the LIRE demonstration schools. After the classroom observations of a grade 2/3 class and a 4/5 class, the group shared their constructive feedback, both positive and areas of improvement, and then discussed the impact of LIRE. Below are highlights of the exchange:

- The group agreed upon a feedback system before observing the teachers in their classroom. When the group reported out, they shared positive observations and challenges that were focused around multi-grade pedagogy.
- The Senegalese team praised The Gambian regional director for placing a female in a head teacher position and commended her for accepting a rural position and applauded her for her work.
- The group discussed the impact of the exchange. The region 5 director of The Gambia remarked that Senegal and The Gambia are the same people and that some Gambian children go to school in Senegal and vice versa. Therefore, it is valuable to learn from each other and share practices to improve education. The exchange was also noted as an
opportunity to share knowledge that was created by the teachers and relevant to their context.

- The group all agreed that it is really important to maintain the exchanges.

### 2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the LIRE initiative was threefold:

1) **There was an external evaluation conducted on the LIRE initiative in March-April and the complete report is available in a separate document.**

2) **A Multi-Grade M&E toolkit was produced by LIRE team members. The toolkit is intended for other MG initiatives. Some of the tools were used and implemented during LIRE. For examples, the Needs Assessment tools and the classroom observation tools. Due to the size of the toolkit, this is a separate document.**

3) **There was ongoing M&E of the teachers, using and modifying the classroom observation tools that are found in the M&E toolkit. All teachers were observed and assessed by the observation tool on two occasions, in-between trainings. The teachers were observed after the first and second trainings. They were observed by the LIRE team and inspectors (Senegal) or cluster monitors (The Gambia). Below is a detailed description of this process.**

#### Senegal

**First Trip:** During November 2008, the participating inspectors in the three regions, conducted classroom observation visits in which they used the Teacher Observation Checklist to conduct an observation for the M&E trip. Time was given to discuss observations with teachers during the November training. While the inspectors of Kaffrine used their observations as a method of control, the inspectors of Podor used it as support. LIRE reviewed with Kaffrine the purposes of the M&E trip. Discussion took place about the Inspector’s Teacher Observation Checklist (M&E tool) developed in the workshop in May. The inspectors conducted one round of observations with it. During both teacher trainings, they discussed ways to modify and improve.

**Second Trip:** The second M&E trip was conducted from January 21 – 31, 2009 and the following was noted:

- The LIRE team found that teachers involved in the project very motivated. They all were trying to go above and beyond for the success of the project. They were aware that the main outcome of the project was an effective learning.
- From the teachers’ perspectives, the training sessions brought self-confidence, interest in their work as multigrade teachers, a mastery of teaching techniques, knowledge, and a better organization of the work. The teachers felt that there students learned better. Most of Kaffrine’s teachers have never had training in multigrade teaching before the LIRE project. In Podor, some teachers attended training sessions before, but they found a
difference in the “seriousness” of the teachers training and the availability of the documents.

- They all found the self instruction material very helpful. It enables teachers to keep students busy while teaching other grades. The use of local resources was mentioned many times as an important tool, a module that teachers learned during the training sessions.

- The peer tutoring was not mentioned many times, but some teachers in Kaffrine said that they used it. Some teachers have created mixed group of students composed of good and poor level students, since all students live in the same villages; they help each other within and outside the classroom to do their home work.

- They found the training modules relevant an adapted to their teaching needs. After the training sessions, teachers have shared the material with those multigrade teachers that have not been trained in multigrade teaching. Teachers shared the LIRE materials within the same school or within the region. The impact was more important on head teachers because they replicate the training with other teachers within the school just after the training and the material was available for all teachers.

- The Arabic teachers who attended the meetings said that they were affected by the changes in the classroom schedule due to the implementation of the project and that the LIRE teachers training have a positive impact on teachers.

- In general, the outcomes of the teachers focus group showed that the training tools were used in the classrooms to improve the teaching, it was also shared among other teachers to help other teachers, and the help make a better use of the local resources.

The Gambia

First Trip: 19 October – 21 October: LIRE team members, Emily Sarr and Rebecca Paulson along with trainers Nakulang Ceesay and Omar Baldeh, conducted classroom observations at each of the 7 demonstration schools, observing all participating teachers. A respective cluster monitor for each school site also conducted an observation using the observation form. Generally, what the team observed was most teachers teaching to one grade level. Overall the teachers demonstrated very little evidence of MG teaching. In most schools, lesson plans and scheme of work were not completed nor checked by the head teachers. The team discussed their findings with the training participants during the following training, but approached it in a supportive way. Teachers said that they did not know how to do anything different at this point. Changes were made to the training to include a micro-teaching exercise.

Second Trip: 24 November – 25 November: LIRE team members, Emily Sarr, Rebecca Paulson, and Alicia Fitzpatrick, along with trainers Nakulang Ceesay and Omar Baldeh, conducted classroom observations at each of the 7 demonstration schools, observing all participating teachers. A respective cluster monitor for each school site also conducted an observation using the observation form. There was great improvement in the classroom organization, management, instruction and preparation observed during this observation compared to the previous observation trip. At one school, the headmaster sat in on the observations of his teachers and the feedback session. Most of the teachers demonstrated more confidence and there was evidence from the students’ behavior that new routines (characteristic of MG) had been in place for a while. Overall, team LIRE, the trainers, and cluster monitors were pleased with the findings of
the observation and shared the results and feedback with the participants at the following training. Teachers commented that a lot of them felt more confident in their classroom as a result of learning MG pedagogy during the trainings.

2.7 Lessons Learned/Challenges

There have been various challenges and associated lessons learned during the implementation of this project, which are outlined below:

**Perceptions of multi-grade education**

**Challenges**

- The lack of meaningful pre-service training or preparation for multi-grade settings in Senegal and The Gambia not only renders the teachers ill-prepared for the reality of their teaching assignments, but lowers both the morale of the teachers and the communities. The teachers are also quite motivated to change their teaching assignment, thus there is a high turnover at multi-grade schools.
- Teachers are given assignments far from their homes. This also contributes to high turnover rates as teachers are then often motivated to change their assignments to live closer to home, and further contributes to a divide between the school and community as the teachers is often from a different group than the village.
- Teachers then sometimes live outside the village, often in a more central location with other teachers who have been assigned to the area. This further deepens the divide between the teachers and the communities in which they work.
- Partly due to the factors mentioned above, but partly due to beliefs around poverty, multi-grade schooling is thought to be a sub-standard approach to education in both countries, and for the communities, indicative of the belief that their governments are not committed to their communities.

**Lessons learned**

- Parents and community members have noticed a change in teachers' commitment and an increase in their children's motivation to go to school.
- The main focus of the LIRE project is to provide in-service trainings to teachers in multi-grade schools in rural areas. The trainings have been well-received, and the LIRE team observed teachers demonstrating their new multi-grade strategies during the M&E trips.
- LIRE collaborated with the Teacher Training College in The Gambia and l’École de Formation (EFI) in Senegal to provide pre-service teaching materials and trainings. Such linkages with TTCs are crucial for further implementation of multi-grade approaches.
- LIRE arranged teacher to teacher meetings so that the teachers could meet to share ideas and experiences and feel less isolated in their communities. This has had the impact of encouraging the teachers to work together, improve sustainability of multi-grade pedagogies, and boost morale. The teachers in both The Gambia and Senegal stated
that the experience helped to build support within a community of practice, both at the regional level as well as international (as reported during The Gambia and Senegal exchange). Some teachers believe that MG was only an approach used in their country, so the exchanges made them feel more confident and part of a global community.

- Senegal and The Gambia teachers and education officials value the teacher exchanges and would like to continue. Regional officials and school directors should be encouraged to conduct regional exchanges to maintain the professional communities of learning in which the teachers can continue improving their practice through collaboration and Action Research.
- LIRE also worked on a local, regional, and national advocacy campaign to disseminate information on the many benefits of multi-grade pedagogy. Press conferences and releases have been disseminated at the national level.

**Lack of resources**

**Challenges**

- A significant challenge has been the lack of resources in the classrooms. Teachers, inspectors, and the communities consistently requested materials for multi-grade pedagogy during all meetings and trainings.
- Another challenge has been the legacy of other projects for multi-grade trainings that have been successful in both Senegal and The Gambia but have run out of funding. There is a concern amongst policymakers and inspectors that this project will be another non-starter.

**Lessons Learned**

- Teachers and education officials have reported that the pedagogical strategies that they have learned are valuable for all teachers and should not be limited to multi-grade teachers. The trained trainers in multi-grade should be encouraged to train other teacher trainers at the teacher institutes and adopted the trainings guide and teachers manual for teacher training.
- Video-tapping the trainings and also excellent teachers in their classroom could have been a valuable tool used at the teacher training institutes in both countries.
- School management committees identified resources needed to support multi-grade education in their respective schools and spent the school-site grants to acquire some of these needed resources.
- A major focus of the training in the third series was making instructional aids out of local materials and using the community as a resource. Teachers identified local resources and created teaching aids to be used in their multi-grade classrooms. During the monitoring and evaluation trip in Senegal and the teacher exchange visit in The Gambia, teachers were observed using local resources in their lessons. School directors and head teachers should be encouraged to allocate in-service time to create teaching aids from local materials and collaborate on ways to involve the community.
- LIRE and participants collaborated throughout the training series to create a teacher's guide that will be used as a meaningful resource in the classroom targeting specific...
challenging of a multi-grade teacher. The Ministries of education of both countries should distribute the resources at regional centers, cluster points, and school to provide access to the teachers. The trained inspectors and cluster trainers should provide training for other teachers and officials in areas that were not part of the LIRE pilot project.

- Teachers in Senegal reported sharing the multi-grade resources, such as the teachers' guide and the training materials, with other teachers within their respective schools, as well as within their regions. Some teachers provided trainings as well.
- The ministries should support a national effort of curriculum adaptation for multi-grade education as well as the production of supporting resources, such as instructional worksheets, to assist in the reducing the extra workload for teachers while trying to improve the quality of multi-grade education.
- The work that the teachers created during the trainings was included in the Teachers' handbook of each country. This increased their confidence levels.

**Gender inequalities**

**Challenges**

- **Gender inequalities** are a significant challenge to overcome. In Senegal, there have been only 3 female teachers at the trainings and no female inspectors. This is in part due to a lower number of female teachers, but even at schools with a male and a female teacher, the male teacher attends the trainings. Further, the teachers spoke frequently about the low retention rates among their female students as they progress through their schooling.
- During the monitoring and evaluation trip—classroom observations conducted by LIRE and inspectors—it was observed that male students were often the leaders in collaborative work.

**Lessons Learned**

- During the international exchange between Senegal and The Gambia participants, the Senegalese education officials commended The Gambia for having a female head teacher. Supporting a community of practice among the educational officials between both countries, could lead to an ongoing exchange of good practices.
- More effort should have been made to include more female teachers from Senegal.
3. West Africa Multi-Grade Workshop

From May 18 – 21, 2009 the international workshop of the project Learning Initiatives for Rural Education (LIRE) took place at Lamentin Hotel in Saly/Somone, Mbour, Senegal. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Pre-school, Elementary, and Middle Schools of Senegal in collaboration with The World Bank and LIRE team. Educational policy makers, officials, officers, teacher trainers, and teachers from The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea were attendance. Details of the conference and evaluation findings are available in a separate document.

Purpose of the workshop

The intent of the workshop was to share the pedagogy tools, notably the teacher’s guide and the training manual, developed by the LIRE project for Senegal and The Gambia and to discuss current and future multi-grade education policies and strategies.

Strategies

The conference was a venue to showcase and share the experiences, challenges and approaches to multi-grade education. It was a participatory approach (modeling a multi-grade learning environment) with opportunities to understand and enact all stakeholders. The conference included two micro-teaching sessions with teachers involved in the project. A pilot MG classroom within the conference hotel was set-up, equipped with educational resources conceived locally. Activities also included a visit to a LIRE demonstration school in Rufisque. The sessions were facilitated to create opportunities for group work to foster a community of learning. Plenary sessions provided time to discuss MG policy and pedagogies in different countries and to exchange experience and ideas. All the activities allowed participants to compare their current situation of multi-grade education and identify future initiatives on multi-grade education.

Attendees at the conference included the World Bank; the University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA; officials from the Ministries of Education of Senegal, The Gambia, and Guinea; the LIRE team; inspectors, and teachers.

3.1 Summary Program of the Workshop

Day 1: May 18, 2009

- **Opening Ceremony:**
  - Mr. Buoy, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education, the Gambia;
  - Mr. Ndiaye) Director Cabinet, Ministry of Education Senegal;
  - Professor Gretchen B. Rossman; Director LIRE team
  - Lily Mulatu, Senior specialist education, the World Bank

- **Session 1: Qualities of the MG Teacher**
  Activity: What makes a good MG teacher? What makes a good mono-grade teacher?

- **Session 2: Microteaching Demonstration**
  Strategy: Role play
Closing Activity: Reflections on Learning

Day 2: Tuesday May 19, 2009

- Session 1: Ice Breaker
- Session 2: Panel Presentations: Status of MG in various countries (10-min presentations) given by Mr. Hann (Podor), Mr. Jammeh (The Gambia), Mr. Cisse (Guinea), and Mr. Samb (Senegal)
- Session 3: Microteaching
- Session 4: Treasure Hunt: To become familiar with the resources; the teachers handbook and training manual
- Session 5: Local teaching and learning resources: Exhibit Walk (lead by Nakulang Cessay)
- Session 6: Preparation for Rufisque Classroom visit

Day 2: Wednesday May 20, 2009

- Session 1: School visit: Ndiakhirate Peulh and Niaga Peulh in Rufisque

  *Objective:* Observe teachers trained through the LIRE project in a real teaching situation, discuss with community members, and discuss pedagogic approaches and advocacy strategies to better improve communities.

  *Strategies:* Visit two schools, observe one teaching session and discuss with communities.

- Session 2: Debriefing school visit as a whole group

Day 3: Thursday May 21, 2009

- Session 1: Monitoring and Evaluation:

  *Objective:* Discuss the system of monitoring and evaluation prepared by the project LIRE and share the experience of inspectors from the field.

  *Strategies:* Presentation of the experience of Kaffrine (Mr. Gning, Inspector Kaffrine).
  - Impact of the training on teachers' performance
  - Impact of the teachers to teachers exchange program on teachers
  - Implication of other funding agencies: World Vision supported the training of 102 teachers, using the guide and the manual
Session 2: Examination of the Senegal and The Gambia Classroom Observation tool

Session 3: The Next Steps on MG pedagogy and policies (Presentations by Mr. Sowe, Mr. Bouy, Mr. Cisse)

Closing Ceremony

- Ceremony of certificates of participation
- Thank you notes from francophone group by Mr. Makan Cisse from Guinea
- Thank you notes from Anglophone group by Mr. Baboucar Sowareh from the Gambia
- Mme Mbarou Gassama Mbaye Speech on behalf of Professor Rossman, Director of LIRE programme, Umass
- Mme Lily Mulatu’s speech, the World Bank
- Mr. Babucar Buoy Permanent secretary Education of the Gambia
- Closing speech of the general Secretary of Ministry de l’enseignement préscolaire, l’élémentaire et du moyen secondaire.

3.2 Resulting Policy Implications
The following policy recommendations were generated by participants:

- **Create a line-item on national budgets** in Senegal and the Gambia to follow up the Multigrade education initiative of the LIRE project: All countries have recognized the positive impact of the project because of the availability of MGC documents and the training.

- **Continue sensitization for community members** to better support the multigrade schools. Training material could be developed for teachers to better sensitize communities.

- **Sign official MOU** with ministries of education of Senegal and The Gambia

- **Design and adopt evaluation tools** to monitor multigrade students learning outcomes

- **Make the project an independent body** not depending on NGO: Open a separate account for the project and conduct activities on the field with local consultants and the ministry of education.

- **Create a framework to share the tools with other countries** involved in multigrade education.

- **Include the LIRE materials on future national curricula** of Senegal and The Gambia
➢ **Continue sharing the experience of Senegal and the Gambia:** recommend the two ministries to develop a framework for teachers exchange visit and policy makers meeting to discuss and exchange policy experiences.

### 3.3 Pedagogy Recommendations
The following pedagogical recommendations were generated by participants:

➢ **Continue to build upon the community of practice that was developed through LIRE**

- The Gambia and Senegal want to continue teacher exchanges (TG P.S. welcomed it and told his officers to put in a request for it. He also granted open and direct lines of communication between Senegalese education officers and The Gambia).

- The idea of creating an online site as a space to continue sharing resources was an idea from the Podor group of teachers and inspectors. Guinea has materials, such as self-instructional worksheets, that other countries would like to have and visa versa.

- Podor has created a MG club to continue the collaborative efforts between teachers and as a means for M&E.

- Guinea would like to have exchanges with Senegal and The Gambia to learn the MG programming

➢ **Continue and expand trainings**

- The Gambia has continued to train cluster trainers who have been conducting step-down trainings for teachers. Senegal should do this as well.

- Teachers in Senegal have been sharing resources with other teachers who were not part of the trainings. The trained teachers should assist in trainings. TGPS stated this would be a good idea as well.

➢ **Provide opportunities to learn how to produce locally-made resources**

- Senegal wants an opportunity to learn more from The Gambia about the production and utilization of locally-made teaching resources.

### 3.4 Summary of Conference Evaluations

Summary of the evaluation

1. **Pre-workshop preparation**

- Most of the participants felt they were not well informed about the workshop, what was expected of them and hence felt a bit ill prepared for some of the tasks.
• Transport and logistics especially of the Gambia participants were not well communicated and participants were unhappy of their lack of information.
• Any changes in the logistics, such as transport and accommodations should be discussed with the participants.

2. Workshop itself

• Most of the participants appreciated the diversity of the workshop facilitation, engagement with all participants and the variety
• The involvement of counterparts from different countries was also highlighted as a positive way of learning
• The school visits were mentioned by most of the participants as valuable as it was a great way of seeing a real multigrade class and appreciate the workshop lesson
• The micro-teaching were also very appreciated. However, there were comments that these should have been arranged well before hand to allow proper preparations by the teachers.
• The workshop organizers and facilitators were appreciated for their interactions and disposition that made them easy to work with

3. Logistics

• There were a lot of comments on the transport logistics especially from the Gambian counterparts who felt that the decisions of their travel was imposed on there and they were not consulted in the process
• Some of the participants would have preferred to get a per diem and get their own accommodation
• The issue of per diem was raised by most of the participants

4. Overall rating

• Overall, the workshop was rated highly with most people commending the workshop in the use of a participatory facilitation method, the use of micro-teaching among others.
• Only one participant rated the workshop poor due to the lack of a per diem
• Most of the participants listed training as one way they plan to use the skills they have learnt in the workshop in their different regions.