Enabling Quality Instruction, Empowering Effective Early Reading Acquisition

Lessons Learned From a Three-Year Partnership with Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal

International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Ministries of Education of Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal
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Context

Addressing a global challenge: Education 2030
Context

Addressing a global challenge: Literacy for all
Taking the measure of the early literacy crisis

Quality of education

- About 115 million children who do make it into school are still expected to lack basic reading skills by grade 4

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What are the prerequisites to positive learning outcomes?

(Stabback, Malems and Georgescu, 2011)
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Quality curriculum
Clearly documented, aligned, inclusive curricula explicit as in what, why, and how students should learn (Stubble, Malems and Georgescu, 2013)

Quality teaching
Teachers equipped with the theoretical and practical knowledge required to develop context- and culture-sensitive strategies that effectively foster early reading acquisition (IE-Unesco, forthcoming)
Quality curriculum

Clearly documented, aligned, inclusive curricula explicit as to what, why, and how students should learn

(Stabback, Malems and Georgescu, 2011)
Quality teaching

Teachers equipped with the theoretical and practical knowledge required to develop context- and culture-sensitive strategies that effectively foster early reading acquisition

(IBE-UNESCO, forthcoming)
African governments typically recognize quality early reading education as a crucial mean to achieve effective learning and later inclusion, but often are not capable of ensuring the coherence advocated by researchers.
To improve curriculum alignment

To improve teachers' readiness to improve teaching to read and write

To improve education system efficiency
37% of students are functionally illiterate after five years in primary school (PASEC 2009)

Monolingual and bilingual formal education models coexist
G 20% of functionally illiterate students (DESAS 2007)

A long history of multilingual reading and writing instruction, soon to be officially validated
38% of functionally illiterate students (PASEC 2009)

French remains the official language of instruction

Growing governmental interest in bilingual education
The International Bureau of Education is the UNESCO institute specializing in curriculum development and related matters.
The project

‘Improving Learning Outcomes in Early Grade Reading: Integration of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning Materials, and Assessment’ (2013-2016)
A large-scale capacity-building project aiming to enable the development and implementation of a more effective reading curriculum in Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal.
Sponsored by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

Extends over 3 years (2013-2016)

The project does not bring a model
A service to be provided in 2 phases:

1. international and national diagnostic study allowing to formulate recommendations

2. Based on recommendations, curriculum development and capacity-building activities
Improving Learning Outcomes in Early Grade Reading: Integration of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning Materials, and Assessment (2013-2016)

Phase 1

Objective 1: Identify the latest findings in the area of early reading education internationally

Objective 2: Analyze existing curriculum documents and actual teaching practices in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Senegal

Objective 3: Provide education system stakeholders with recommendations tailored to national contexts
Objective 1: identify the latest findings in the area of early reading education internationally
Objective 2: analyze existing curriculum documents and actual teaching practices in Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal
National assessments: sample guiding questions

- How is the concept of 'reading literacy' defined in curricular and teaching documents?
- Do materials explicitly address and provide guidelines for early reading instruction and assessment?
- Are the capacities and language backgrounds of emergent readers taken into account?
- Is the notion of progression a structuring element?
- Are curricular documents, resources, teacher education and teaching practices aligned?
National assessments:
key numbers

- Over **200** curricular documents analyzed
- **36** classroom observations
- **110** interviews with teachers and school principals
Objective 3: provide education system stakeholders with recommendations tailored to national contexts
A unique research report

Part 1: international study
  (comparative analysis of latest research insights)

Part 2: national studies
  (document analysis + classroom observations + interviews)

Conclusion: recommendations to education system actors
Phase 2

Step 1: IBE-supported Ministries of Education produce targeted curricular documents.

Step 2: IBE-supported Ministries of Education train teacher trainers to best use these materials.

Step 3: Ministries of Education pilot implementation and assess results.
Step 1: IBE-supported Ministries of Education produce **targeted curricular documents**

**Deliverables**
- National orientations on teaching reading and writing in French as a second language + a supporting document for instruction (Sénégal)
- 2 teacher-training modules covering grades 3/2 and 3/4 of primary school + a guide for practitioners (Niger)
- A guide and toolkit for teachers + a revised training module (Burkina Faso)
Deliverables

National orientations on teaching reading and writing in French as a second language + a supporting document for instruction (Senegal)

2 teacher-training modules covering grades 1/2 and 3/4 of primary school + a guide for practitioners (Niger)

A guide and toolkit for teachers + a revised training module (Burkina Faso)
Step 2: IBE-supported Ministries of Education

**train teacher trainers** to best use these materials
Step 3: Ministries of Education pilot implementation and assess results
9 workshops (3 in each country) leading to the production of critical curriculum and pedagogical material

6 workshops (2 in each country) enabling teacher trainers to knowledgeably implement the new material
‘Improving Learning Outcomes in Early Grade Reading: Integration of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning Materials, and Assessment’ (2013-2016)

Impact

What has the project allowed to achieve already?

- A different understanding of what it means to teach and to learn to read (5 components)
  Reading and writing have to go together

- The awareness of the role of the national language spoken / need of the second language teaching approach for the language of instruction

- The need to train teachers and teacher trainers specifically to teach to read and write

- The crucial importance of curriculum alignment to increase system effectiveness
A different understanding of what it means to teach and to learn to read (5 components)

Reading and writing have to go together
The awareness of the role of the national language spoken / need of the second language teaching approach for the language of instruction
The need to train teachers and teacher trainers specifically to teach to read and write
The crucial importance of curriculum alignment to increase system effectiveness
Impact

Across the three countries, almost 700 teacher trainers have benefited from workshops where they learn to translate reforms in curriculum and pedagogy into their own practice.

In Niger alone, over 600 teachers will be trained over Spring 2016.
Looking ahead...


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