

Contract N°: IQC # EDH-I-00-05-00031-00
Order N°: EDH-I-03-05-00031

“Road to Reading”
USAID / PHARE

1st QUARTERLY REPORT
(For the period of August – September 2008)

November 4, 2008

Technical Assistance of Education Development Center/EDC

in collaboration with

RTI International (RTI)

Prepared by: Thelma Khelghati (EDC)
Rebecca Rhodes (EDC)

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USAID / PHARE PLAN DE TRAVAIL – ANNEE 1

(AOÛT 2008 – SEPTEMBRE 2009)

16 Septembre 2008

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Préparé par : Thelma Khelghati (EDC)
Rebecca Rhodes (EDC)
Jennifer Spratt (RTI)

Quarterly Report For the Period of August – September 2008

I. Introduction and quarter highlights

Much of the energy, resources and time during this initial period were devoted to program start-up: introduction of the program to stakeholders, recruitment of personnel, establishing systems, processes and procedures for effective program management. Having already in place a nucleus of personnel from the FIER Program, facilitated the transition period and enabled us to “hit the ground running.”

Major accomplishments of the period include:

- Preparation of documents in French and English to present the program (one page summary, brochure, PowerPoint presentations)
- Conducting the recruitment process for technical and administrative positions
- Establishment of a technical committee under the leadership of the DNEB to provide technical oversight
- Development of the Year 1 Workplan
- Creation of a database of elementary schools in the country public (classic and curriculum) community, private and medersas supported by USAID for the 2008-09 school year
- Creation of a database on local radio stations and coverage
- Organization of initial workshops to plan the process for evaluating the pilot of the new IFM curriculum.
- Initial consultations with the Ministry re. EGRA testing
- Consultations with other technical and financial partners re. synergy, in particular PAMOFE
- Literature review in preparation for the environmental scan
- Execution of phase 1 of the study on the feasibility of a dedicated radio frequency for use by the MEBALN
- Revision of the Grade 3-4 Teacher’s Guides that accompany the radio broadcasts developed under FIER

The following consultants and home office staff supported program implementation during this period:

Atiyah Edwards	August 22 – September 19	EDC Home Office
Jennie Spratt	August 27 – September 8	RTI
Max Graef	September 22 – October 12	EDC
Sylvaine von Mende	September 17 – October 14	EDC
Jonathan Myrtil	September 28 – October 12	EDC Home Office

This report covers the first two months of program implementation. It is organized thematically under the broad intermediate result areas. Expected activities are based on the Year 1 Workplan.

II. Intermediate Result 1: Improved Quality of Instruction for Grades One through Six or Improved Instruction to Reinforce Literacy and Numeracy in Grades 1 – 6 (Results 1-14)

II. A. Expected activities

Start-up / Technical

- Introduction of the program to MEBALN staff and technical and financial partners
- ##### Development of Competency Frameworks for teachers and supervisors
- Review of literature / documents related to teacher and supervisor performance

Revision of IFM Curriculum

- Consultations with actors re. piloting the new IFM curricula
- Development of the methodology for evaluating the pilot

Establishment or upgrading of IFM Virtual Training Centers

- Conduct inventory of existing technology at each IFM

Broadcasts of Grade 3-4 Radio Programs

- Consultations re. inclusion of IRI in daily classroom schedule
- Revision and printing of Grade 3-4 teacher guides for radio programs
- Establish broadcast contracts with radio stations
- Purchase radios for distribution to schools

Improving broadcast quality nationwide

- Conduct a feasibility study re. establishment of a single broadcast frequency for MEBALN

Improving the teaching of reading

- Establish guiding principles for development of materials for teachers to improve the teaching of reading

Improved early intervention evaluation system (EGRA)

- Consultations with MEBALN on objectives and parameters of the study
- Establishment of joint working group
- Identification of sample for baseline
- Develop and validated adaptations of EGRA tool for Malian context

II. B. Actual Activities and Achievements

II.B.1. Start-up / Technical

II.B.1.a Orientation Meeting with USAID

On August 6, our senior management team met with the USAID Education Team, and the Regional and Mission Contract Officers to review the major requirements of the task order, start-up plans, and mechanisms for reporting and collaboration. We also paid a courtesy visit to the Director of USAID.

II.B.1.b Introduction of the program to MEBALN staff and technical and financial partners

Several documents were developed in French and English to present the key objectives and domains of intervention of the program PHARE to actors and partners in the education sectors. These included a one page summary sheet, a PowerPoint presentation for interested parties at USAID/Washington, a PowerPoint presentation for a TSCTP representative who travelled to the field, a PowerPoint presentation for the Mali education partners' group, and a summary of program results for the secretary general. (See Appendix A for copies).

Courtesy visits were made to members of the MEBALN cabinet and to the Heads of departments who would be most involved in implementing the program. Those met included the:

- Secretary General of MEBALN
- Counselor responsible for Basic Education
- National Director of Basic Education (DNEB)
- Assistant National Director of Basic Education
- Director of the National Center for Education (CNE)
- Director of the CADDE and several staff members
- Head of the Division of Teacher Education (DEN)
- Head of the Curriculum Division of the CNE
- Head of the Section of Preservice Education

Along with Natasha deMarcken and Ibrahima Sissoko of USAID, we had more in-depth consultations (see minutes in Appendix B) with the Counselor responsible for Basic Education focused on program staffing issues and mechanisms for program oversight. As a result of this meeting, it was decided to:

- allow for recruitment of MEBALN staff who would be seconded to work full-time with the Program's technical teams
- reactivate the Steering Committee responsible for oversight of USAID's education sector programs.

In-depth consultations were held with the leadership of and consultants of CRC-Sogema who are responsible for assisting in implementation of the PAMOFE program.

II.B.1.c Presentations to the Education Sector Technical and Financial Partners and to the USAID partners meeting

A PowerPoint presentation was made to Education Sector Technical and Financial Partners at the regular partners meeting on September 2nd. We also presented Powerpoints to the USAID partners' meeting and to the TSCTP consultant, Angela Martin in mid-September.

II.B.1.d Establishment of a Technical Committee under the DNEB for Technical Oversight

In preparation for development of the annual work plan, a meeting was held with Section Heads from the CNE, DNEB and CADDE to review the program implementation plan and to consult on the activities expected to occur in Year 1. As a result of this meeting, it was decided to establish a Technical Committee composed of those present to provide technical oversight for the program. (See decision of the DNEB dated September 8, 2008 in Appendix C and minutes of first meeting.)

II.B.2. Development of competency frameworks for teachers and supervisors (Result 1)

Staff began collecting documents related to teacher and supervisory performance. We discovered that the PAMOFE workplan for this year included the development of frameworks for improving the performance of pedagogical support personnel (principals and pedagogical counselors). As a first phase in this process, the Division of Teacher Education of the DNEB organized a workshop in Tabacoro from September 14 to 26 with the overall objective of strengthening the competencies of principals and pedagogical counselors (CPs) in the pedagogical and administrative leadership of in-service education. More specifically, workshop goals included:

- familiarizing participants with the competency framework for supervisors under development
- continuing development of the framework
- ascertaining the desired profile for principals and CPs as described in official documents
- further developing the competency framework to serve as a basis for training principals and pedagogical counselors in the pedagogical and administrative leadership of in-service education
- developing a first draft of the training program.

Abdoulaye Sarré represented the program at the workshop and both Rebecca Rhodes and Sylvaine von Mendé participated in some of the sessions. We were able to share with workshop participants the Director's kit developed under FIER, which addressed a number of the competency areas under discussion. Rebecca Rhodes and Sylvaine von Mende also held in-depth consultations with the CRC-Sogema leadership on planned objectives and activities in this area which overlaps with objectives and activities envisaged under PHARE. Thanks to these discussions and discussions subsequently held with representatives of ACDI from the Canadian embassy, a formal commitment to collaboration between the two programs is now in place.

II.B.3. Revision of IFM Curriculum (Result 5)

In August, we held a number of technical meetings with MEBALN staff responsible for piloting the new IFM curricula: Bakary Samaké, Coordinator of the Preservice Education sector of the DEN and Youssouf Konandji, Head of the Curriculum Section of the CNE. Mr. Konandji provided an update on plans and activities related to the pilot:

- The new curriculum is to be piloted in three IFMs this year: Niono, Kangaba and Bouguini.

- The CNE's budget includes funding to train the professors who will be involved in the pilot, but the funds have not yet been released.
- The first shaping of a monitoring process exists based on instruments used for the new competency-based curriculum
- AFD is supporting development of the IFM curriculum by providing a resident technical advisor due to arrive before the end of the year.

Although the Curriculum Head outlined a rudimentary process for monitoring use of the new curriculum, it was clear that a much more detailed process for determining the curriculum's worth and impact is needed. As a result of these discussions, PHARE financed and assisted in organizing a workshop in Tabocoro from September 8 -12 for the Directors and Program Directors of the IFMs involved in the pilot as well as the CNE and DEN staff responsible for monitoring. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- update the instruments that had been developed for the pilot
- develop and adopt the methodology for the pilot
- develop a draft proposal regarding roles and responsibilities of the various actors to be involved in close monitoring of the pilot

In the course of this workshop, a few draft instruments were developed to assist in gauging the pedagogical impact of the new curriculum. However, the teams were not able to complete drafting the instruments or setting out the methodology for the pilot test. In addition, representatives present from the IFMs raised a number of concerns related to the launching use of the new curriculum.

Immediately following the workshop, the IFM directors gathered for a second day of consultations at the DEN to address these concerns and to identify what they thought needed to be in place for the pilot of the new curriculum to work well. Their main concerns focused on sufficient training for the professors, provision of staff speaking the indicated languages in addition to resource and logistical requests.

Following this meeting, a second workshop was to be organized from October 18 to 29 to enable the group to continue working on developing their methodology and instrumentation. However, the travel schedule for the head of the curriculum division made it impossible to consult with him about the plans for that workshop before the 18th of October. Upon his return from a number of study tours, it was agreed to hold this workshop from December 1-11 to ensure the full participation of all the actors.

II.B.4. Establishment or upgrading of IFM Virtual Training Centers (Result 7)

As a first step to upgrading or establishing Virtual Training Centers in all of the IFMs, in September PHARE staff member Yacouba Traoré began conducting a telephone survey to establish a preliminary inventory of existing computer equipment available to students in each of the IFMs.

II.B.5. Broadcasts of Grade 3-4 Radio Programs (Result 9)

Broadcasting the Grade3-4 radio programs developed under FIER to classes nationwide was one of the primary technical activities proposed for this year. In preparation for broadcasting, we began activities on a number of fronts.

II.B.5.a Developing a database of all schools in the country

One important piece of information we needed to know for planning purposes was exactly how many elementary schools in the country were using the classic curriculum and how many were using the new competency-based curriculum. The CPS' annual survey of elementary schools does not collect information about which curriculum is being used. Program staff member Abdoulaye Kouressi, spearheaded a labor-intensive effort lasting over two months to get data from each CAP in the country regarding the number of public and private schools in their jurisdiction and the curriculum each

school was using. We also collected data on which medersas per CAP had received support from any USAID program (World Education, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services, etc.) as well as the names of local radio stations serving the area. The table below provides a summary of what we learned. There are 4934 public and community schools using the classic curriculum. Based on recommendations from the CNE and DNEB, we decided not to include the schools using the new competency-based curriculum in our broadcast target as the teachers are already having difficulties implementing the curriculum in the current timeframe. Private schools will be offered the opportunity to participate in the broadcast program.

Table 1: Summary of Schools in Mali

N°	AE	Classic Public & Community Curriculum Schools	Competency-based Curriculum Schools	Private Schools	Medersas	Total
Totals		4934	2187	735	1425	9281

Table 2: Summary of Schools Targeted for Radio Broadcasts in Year 1

N°	AE	Classic Curriculum Public Schools – 4 th Grade	Classic Curriculum Community Schools – 4 th Grade	Classic Public & Community Schools – 3 rd Grade	USAID supported Medersas 4 th Grade	Total
Totals		2814	2120	638	115	5687

II.B.5.b. Consultations re. inclusion of IRI in daily class schedule

During the FIER pilot program, principals and teachers often asked how the radio programs fit into the daily class schedule approved by the Ministry. Knowing that this was likely to be one of the most frequently asked questions as we moved toward broadcasting nationwide, we asked the DNEB to send out a communication to all schools confirming that the radio programs were in support of the language arts curriculum and should be considered part of the time slot allocated for language arts.

The DNEB suggested that we hold a workshop with Section Heads from the DNEB to look at the question in more depth and make recommendations. This was done on August 19-29 and additional guidelines were written and included in the teachers' guides for Grades 1 and 2.

During this workshop, participants expressed concern about the length of the 3rd grade programs. Whereas the 4th grade programs are a half hour in length and only cover French, the 3rd grade programs are divided into two 15 minute segments, one in math and one in French. Participants felt it would be difficult for teachers to accommodate their use in class. Segments for each subject area are 30 minutes in length, and as the programs are being broadcast on the radio, they would require the teacher to cut one or both lessons short and move too rapidly from one subject area to another. Their recommendation was to only broadcast the 4th grade programs this year.

Following consultations with the CTO, it was agreed that the radio broadcasts would be limited to 4th grade only, but that the 3rd grade programs would continue to be used in the 638 pilot schools under FIER. The third grade programs will not be broadcast on the radio. Rather each concerned school will receive a complete set of the programs on cassette. This allows teachers to more easily fit the programs into their daily schedule.

On September 3, 2008, the DNEB sent a circular letter to all Academy Directors, copied to the Directors of the CAPs, informing them that the radio programs would begin this school year, that they were one of the strategies for improving teacher performance and student learning adopted under the Strategic Plan for In-service Education, and emphasizing that the radio programs were to be considered part of the time allocated for instruction in French in the daily schedule. (See letter in Appendix D)

II.B.5.c. Revision and printing of Grade 3-4 teacher guides for radio programs

The Grades 3-4 teachers' guides for the program needed to be updated and printed in sufficient quantities to support use of the broadcasts. Bids were received from six printers, and the contract for the Grade 4 guide was signed with Graphique Industries and for the Grade 3 guide, with ImprimServices.

II.B.5.d. Broadcast contract for the 2008-09 school year

In FIER, radio broadcasts were done over the ORTM network in concerned CAPs supplemented by individual contracts with local radio stations as needed to ensure coverage. After consultations with ORTM regional stations regarding the possibility of separate contracts supplemented by local radio stations, we decided to use the full national ORTM network of regional and relay stations for the most extensive and cost-effective coverage. Nonetheless, contract negotiations with the ORTM proved to be much more difficult than had been anticipated. Although Rebecca Rhodes and Boubacar Bocoum, the two Deputy Chiefs of Party met with the Director of the ORTM in early September, presented the overall program objectives and those specific to radio broadcasts, and had been told by the Director to write a letter indicating what we were able to pay, in the end there was a wide gap between what we had budgeted and what the Commercial Director of ORTM was requesting (11 million FCFA versus 34 million). Negotiations continued into October, with the parties settling on 15 million for the use of the entire network. USAID's Governance and Communication Team Member, Moussa Bambara was instrumental in helping us reach closure.

II.B.5.e. Purchasing radios for schools

Radio cassette players are one of the elements to be distributed to schools to facilitate implementation of the radio programs nationwide. In August, we issued a call for bids for a supplier to provide radios for eventual distribution to Malian elementary schools. OCIDM Sarl was the firm selected to supply the radios which will be delivered to the 70 CAPs. The radios will be distributed to principals during the November trainings.

II.B.5.f. Preparations for training principals and teachers

The current plan to train teachers nationwide involves a limited cascade model where PHARE program staff will train all of the four generalist CPs from the CAPs in six training sites. They in turn will plan and conduct a series of one-day training sessions for principals and teachers in their areas grouping no more than 30 participants at a time. Although we had originally intended to hold these sessions in October and begin broadcasts in November, the change of date for the program launching to October, caused us to shift that date to early November and subsequently, the start of broadcasts to early December. Given that the vast majority of schools are being introduced to the use of radio for the first time, we thought it was important to make sure personnel implicated received adequate training before the broadcasts begin.

II.B.6. Improving broadcast quality nationwide (Result 10)

Given the anticipated expansion of the use of radio to all elementary grades under PHARE, a cost-effective alternative to broadcasting over the ORTM, URTEL, or KLEDU networks, as they currently exist, is urgently needed. EDC committed to carrying out a study of the feasibility of establishing a single broadcast frequency for educational programming. Mr. Max Graef of Radioactive spent from September 22 to October 12 in Mali conducting the study. He met with a broad spectrum of public and private communications and radio broadcast providers as well as with concerned officials in the Ministries of Basic Education (MEBALN) and Communication and New Technologies.

A debriefing was held at the MEBALN cabinet on October 10 attended by a few Ministry officials as well as representatives of USAID. (See PowerPoint handout in Appendix E) Mr. Graef sketched out two possible options for a single frequency and the advantages and disadvantages of each. The near-final report should be ready by mid-November at the latest. (See the concerns and comments section below for next steps.)

II.B.7. Improving the teaching of reading (Result 9)

The Reading and Pedagogy Specialist and the Deputy Chief of Party for Pedagogy reviewed the objectives and content of both the competency based and classic curriculums, and drafted a first shaping of a scope and sequence for the 2nd grade radio programs. Because the technical teams will not be in place until early November, we preferred not to move forward on establishing the guiding principles for materials development to improve the teaching of reading. We felt it was better to involve the training and materials production teams fully in this process.

II.B.8. Improved early intervention evaluation system (EGRA) (Result 12)

RTI's Dr. Jennifer Spratt was in Mali from August 27 to September 8th to begin preparations for the EGRA testing in reading. The proposal originally called for administration of the baseline tests for Grades 2, 4, and 6 to be held in December 2008. In addition to consultations with USAID and the program management, Dr. Spratt held working sessions with the entire Research and Evaluation unit of the CNE on the objectives and parameters of the study. She provided an overview of EGRA using a PowerPoint presentation, and then reviewed the actual instruments and testing methodology.

During Dr. Spratt's visit, we realized that RTI International has also received a grant from the Hewlett Foundation to carry out EGRA testing on a national sample in Bambara as well as an impact study of the Institute for Popular Education (IEP)'s work in Kati, again using EGRA. It was evident that this provided an opportunity for synergy and partnership, and we began discussions with the Hewlett Foundation Representative, Penelope Bender who was in Mali at the time as well as with USAID.

From discussions, we realized that some readjustment of timelines would be needed, as the national baseline study funded by Hewlett was scheduled to take place in May 2009 whereas PHARE had scheduled its baseline study in December 2008. Dr. Spratt will be returning to Mali in November to work with a small team from the CNE's evaluation unit to adapt and finalize the EGRA instruments for use in Mali, to train enumerators and to plan for the pilot of the EGRA tests in December. Our current plan is to do the baseline testing for Grade 4 in December 2008, but to carry out the Grade 2 and 6 baseline tests in May 2009. These proposed date adjustments were included in our revised milestone plan submitted on September 30th.

II.B.9. Preparation for environmental scan (Result 4)

One of PHARE's activities for this quarter was preparation for the environmental scan, or "state of the art" study of the use of technology in primary schools to be carried out next quarter. The study is intended to identify current practices in the use of technology and is also meant to determine what is planned in terms of technology upgrades in the near and mid-term future. Based on this information, the program is planning to suggest a number of pilot applications of technology that might be put in place during the school year.

EDC staff member Harouna Ba will travel to Mali to assist the program and the ministry in conducting the scan from November 7 to 22. In preparation for this visit, we assembled and summarized a number of background documents. In addition, a preliminary meeting schedule has been put in place and will be amended as needed on Mr. Ba's arrival to ensure that all related stakeholders have optimal input into the decision-making process about the technology pilots.

II.B.10. Development of the Program Workplan

A major accomplishment of this quarter was the development of the program workplan, and its validation by the technical committee in charge of overseeing the project's implementation. The

workplan was first drafted by the staff, then shared with the committee for feedback, revised, reshared with the committee, and submitted to USAID.

II.B.11. Participation in the “Journées de pilotage de la formation continue” (Result 2)

At the invitation of ACDI/CRC-Sogema, USAID/PHARE staff participated in this seminar from the September 10-12 and presented on the accomplishments of the FIER program and the plans for USAID/PHARE. During these three days, the representatives of the Academies and the CAPs had the opportunity to discuss what progress has been made in in-service teacher training, and to propose solutions for various difficulties encountered. A major difficulty has turned out to be that money does not circulate from the central levels to the AEs and CAPs in accordance with their action plans, making it almost impossible to execute any activities that the structures have determined are important in teacher training. An additional information shared at this meeting was that only about 10% of Mali’s schools actually have a functioning “learning community / communauté d’apprentissage (CAM).” We note that both of these realities could have repercussions for our work with the CAPs, as the incorporation of certain of our activities in CAP action plans and supporting CAMs in their study of reading pedagogies are key elements of our program design.

II.C. Concerns / Comments

II.C.1 Synergy and collaboration with other PTF working in teacher education

Our discovery of overlap and possible redundancy in the development of competency frameworks for CPs and principals highlights the need for coordination of the work of technical and financial partners working in teacher education. Theoretically this leadership and coordination should come from the Ministry itself, in particular from the Division of Teacher Education (DEN). The DEN was involved in the development of the workplans of both PAMOFÉ and PHARE, and its staff regularly interface with both programs. That we were the ones rather than staff of the DEN to sound the alert is a little surprising and somewhat worrisome. We will work in the next quarter to reactivate the coordinating group in teacher education under the leadership of the DEN. In addition, we will pursue direct consultations with concerned actors to facilitate a maximum sharing of information and to ensure that our interventions are mutually reinforcing rather than a duplication of effort.

With regard to the competency frameworks, Sylvaine von Mende carried out an analysis of what has currently been developed and concluded that the interventions of the PAMOFÉ and PHARE programs are complementary rather than repetitive. The PAMOFÉ frameworks read much more like job descriptions, i.e. what general domains and competencies are required. Our intention is to provide a much more behaviorally oriented framework where what these competencies actually look like when applied to day to day situations is spelled out.

In the same way that synergy and coherence is needed in planning the technical activities, we emphasize that the same would be exceedingly helpful in managing logistical considerations such as where workshops are held and per diem policies and rates. It seems to be a well-entrenched practice in Mali to hold technical workshops for MEBALN personnel who live and work in Bamako in neighboring academies rather than in Bamako itself. This raises unnecessarily the cost of holding such workshops. If the need to hold workshops is only occasional, then the practice does not present too much of a problem, but if a program is required to hold frequent working sessions and technical meetings, then it is a far less viable option. The usual argument is that participants are able to concentrate better if the workshops are held outside of Bamako. However, it’s doubtful that a Ministry employee instructed by his superior to participate in an activity or carry out a given task would be negligent or inattentive, regardless of the location of the activity.

Given the volume of work and the number of technical meetings that we will need to hold in order to carry out the technical activities envisaged in this program, the Tabocoro/Kati workshop syndrome is untenable for us. The EDC programs working in Mali (PHARE and PADDEM) have included in our

revised per diem policy a statement that, unless extenuating circumstances warrant it, our policy is to hold workshops for Bamako participants in Bamako itself.

We would appreciate USAID's support in raising this question with other PTF, in particular with ACDI who is the major funder in the area of teacher education. If ACDI would raise the issue or give instructions to its implementing partner SOGEMA to hold workshops in Bamako rather than outside the city boundaries, it would be much easier for SOGEMA to actually adopt and implement a new policy regarding workshops.

II.C.2 Urgency of broadcast frequency issue

As mentioned above, our negotiations with the ORTM proved to be much more arduous than we had expected. This adds a level of urgency to the search for some degree of autonomy in broadcasting for the MEBALN. Over and above the cost issues (which given this year's experience would likely be prohibitive), there is little hope that the ORTM could or would be willing to accommodate fifteen hours of additional programming a week over its national frequency given the current configuration. The daily schedule is already full, and such a large block of time (3 hours per day to cover all 6 grade levels) would require dropping well-established and popular programs currently on the air.

We obviously, in collaboration with the MEBALN, need to do bridge-building with the ORTM and the Ministry of Communications and New Technologies to find a sustainable solution to the question of broadcasting. Once the near final version of the consultant's feasibility study is complete, we will share it initially with USAID and then with the MEBALN, so that the final decision as to what option to recommend will be the Ministry's decision. This will ensure greater ownership from the Ministry of the process and result. Consultations will also be needed with the Minister of Territorial Administration and Local Government and again the Ministry of Communications and New Technologies. The final report will incorporate the results, decisions and recommendations from these high-level meetings.

II.C.3 Late start of IFM curriculum – inadequacy of current process

The plan evolved by the Curriculum Unit of the CNE for monitoring and evaluating the new pilot curriculum is at best sketchy. Although the curriculum unit members are planning to travel intermittently to the field to ask IFM professors how they are doing with the new curriculum, there is no instrumentation or procedure in place to collect information systematically about its use. This, in turn, will make it difficult to structure a revision process grounded in clear feedback from the field.

Assisting to structure the pilot test and revision process presents PHARE with an opportunity to significantly impact teacher preparation and to orient student teachers' experiences in much more practical ways. However, creating a new vision of how potential teachers should be trained for the job will require engagement from the curriculum unit and a commitment on their part to critically examine the curriculum and procedures in place. While we are hopeful that maintaining dialogue with the authorities in charge of the effort will nurture such a commitment, we remain concerned about arriving at consensus around a process that will provide objective insight as to the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum as it now stands.

III. INTERMEDIATE RESULT AT 4 : Improved Access to Quality Basic Education for Targeted Populations (Results 15-22)

III.A. Expected activities

Adapt radio programs for medersa context

- Identify medersas that will participate in the pilot of the grade 3-4 programs
- Produce a correspondence guide to show similarity between content of programs and current French curriculum used in medersas

III.B Actual Activities and Achievements

III.B.1 Adapting radio programs for medersa context (Result 16)

To pilot the use of the radio broadcasts in medersas this year, we will involve those medersas that have received in the past support from any USAID program. As a means to understanding the degree of correspondence that exists between the programs and the current 4th grade medersa French curriculum, Deputy Director for Pedagogy Rhodes and Reading and Pedagogy Specialist Sylvaine von Mende reviewed the medersa French curriculum and developed a table showing where there was linkage. Twenty-five of the thirty programs will fit either easily or reasonably well into the French program of study currently in use in the medersas. Rather than asking the medersas to capture the broadcasts on the radio, they will be provided cassettes of the selected programs. The table below summarizes the linkages.

Table 3: Correspondence between Medersa French Units and Grade 4 Broadcasts

- Unit 1 → Broadcasts 1 and 5
- Unit 2 → Broadcasts 2 and 5
- Unit 3 → Broadcasts 7 and 11
- Unit 4 → Broadcasts 4, 6, 9 and 12
- Unit 5 → Broadcasts 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 17
- Unit 6 → Broadcasts 15 and 18
- Unit 7 → Broadcasts 14 and 17
- Unit 8 → Broadcasts 14 and 17
- Unit 9 → Broadcasts 25 and 29
- Unit 10 → Broadcasts 20, 23, 28 and 30
- Unit 11 → No correspondence
- Unit 12 → No correspondence
- Unit 13 → Broadcasts 22 and 24
- Unit 14 → Broadcasts 26, 28, 29 and 30
- Unit 15 → Broadcasts 26, 28, 29 and 30
- Unit 16 → No correspondence
- Unit 17 → No correspondence
- Unit 18 → No correspondence
- Unit 19 → No correspondence
- Unit 20 → No correspondence
- Unit 21 → No correspondence
- Unit 22 → No correspondence
- Unit 23 → No correspondence

III.B.2. Participation in meetings related to the one classroom schools' initiative (Result 7)

USAID/PHARE technical staff participated in three events related to the MEBALN's one-classroom school initiative during the quarter. Staff members Abdoulaye Sarré and Boubacar Bocoum attended the workshop in Segou where the ministry developed its model and materials for the one classroom schools. Subsequently, in Bamako, Rebecca Rhodes and Sylvaine von Mende participated in the feedback session held for the SEGAL on the initiative after that workshop, and Mr. Abdoulaye Sarré participated in the information meeting where it was announced that the Hewlett Foundation would provide a grant for the NGO OMAES to begin setting up some one-classroom schools. Given that one of our Year 2 tasks is to support the development and implementation of one-classroom schools, USAID/PHARE staff will continue, as possible, to participate in meetings and efforts regarding the development of this initiative.

III.B.3 Partnerships to expand educational opportunities (Result 22)

III.B.3.a Peace Corps

Collaborating with the US Peace Corps will greatly assist the PHARE program to monitor program activities around the country. Recognizing that this is also of interest to the USAID mission, we contacted Peace Corps in mid-September with a list of six possible ways in which volunteers could support the program's work. These ranged from helping collect monitoring data in the field to working full-time with staff in Bamako to develop inputs for the schools. As of this writing, these job descriptions have been shared with Peace Corps and two volunteers have expressed possible interest in working with the program. The program has also been invited to present at the Peace Corps IST in January to see if any additional volunteers might be interested in participating.

In September, a Peace Corps volunteer, Hunter Gray who is assigned to work with IEP in Kati, spent two days volunteering with the PHARE program in Bamako. He developed a first draft of how a smart phone pilot might be conducted in Kati working with up to ten teachers and is enthusiastic about helping us implement the pilot.

III.B.3.b Public / Private Partnerships

During this period, we sent letters to all of the businesses and organizations mentioned in the proposal that had expressed interest in supporting some aspect of the program. In addition, we held preliminary discussions with Salimata Bangoura, President of the Malian One Laptop Per Child Association on possibilities of developing a partnership. We expect to develop a more formal agreement with the association during the next quarter.

IV. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

We are in the process of finalizing the Performance Monitoring Plan for the program. This process will involve coming to agreement with the MEBALN about the non-foreign-assistance-framework indicators retained for gauging the progress of the program, prior to submitting a draft plan to USAID/Mali for review and eventually approval.

V. Administrative and Logistical Activities / Issues

This was the start-up phase of the program, so as mentioned earlier, a great deal of our time, energy and resources were devoted to recruiting personnel and putting in place the systems and processes needed for effective project management.

V.A Recruitment

We carried out two recruitment processes, one an open public recruitment for administrative and technological positions and the second, open only to MEBALN staff for technical positions. The decision to limit most of the technical positions to MEBALN staff from the central and decentralized levels was to ensure that the competencies and skills acquired by staff while working with the program will be reinvested into the system at the end of the program. The deadline for applications for the open recruitment was September 5 and for the technical recruitment, September 25. We received over 1500 applications for the administrative and technological positions and over 500 for the MEBALN recruitment. The hiring process included both a competency test and interview for most positions. After reference checks, we hired the selected administrative and technological staff. For the positions involving MEBALN staff, the Cabinet asked to be involved in the final selection process. Via the DNEB and the Counselor responsible for Basic Education, we forwarded the results of the recruitment process with our recommendations for hiring to the Secretary General who gave verbal approval for us to go ahead with hiring on October 17. These MEBALN staff members are in the process of securing secundment (mise en disponibilité) from the Civil Service Ministry. Once we have proof that their salaries have been stopped, we will proceed with hiring. We expect the technical teams to be in place by mid-November. Our total staff will number 40 (See list in Appendix F).

V.B. Key Personnel Issues

V.B.1 Reading and Pedagogy Specialist, Sylvaine von Mende

Sylvaine von Mende was originally scheduled to take up residence in Mali on October 1. However in September, her husband was diagnosed with a heart problem that will require surgery. She was able to spend nearly a month in Mali from mid September to mid October where she assisted in recruiting the technical teams, in analyzing the competency-based and classic elementary curricula, and in developing the scope and sequence for Grade 2 radio programs. She is expected to take up residence in January 2009. In the interim, we are in regular email correspondence with Ms. Von Mende who is able to contribute to the work long distance. The Deputy Chief of Party responsible for Pedagogy continues to assume leadership.

V.B.2 Coordinator for Research and Monitoring and Evaluation

We have had to adjust our salary scale somewhat based on current market prices and equity concerns. We are in consultation with our home office and the EDC/PADDEM program here so that there is coherence between salary options for the two programs. This will be finalized in the next quarter. We are also in negotiation with Dr. Cheick Oumar Fomba, the Research and Monitoring and Evaluation specialist identified in our proposal, as his original 1420 did not reflect his complete recent salary history. Further negotiations with him will be necessary before we can finalize his contract.

V.C. Office space

With expected numbers of 40, our current office space at the DEN is too small. We also will need a second studio as the volume of production for six grade levels is too great for one studio alone. The Secretary General has offered a Ministry building across from the French Cultural Center on the Avenue de l'Indépendance. The building currently houses a program funded by UNDP that is scheduled to close in mid-October. The plan is to move the administrative and financial offices to that site. We will also expand the current office space at the DEN to accommodate the new studio and a possible meeting space.

VI. Conclusion

USAID/PHARE has gotten off to a strong administrative and pedagogical start. The two months of this reporting period have enabled us to identify most of our staff members, to begin to put in place program policies and procedures, and to engage in important relationship-building with key stakeholders at all levels of the MEBALN. All of this groundwork will stand the program in good stead as we move forward over the coming quarter with the training of teachers for use of the 4th grade programs, with the development and testing of new pedagogy materials (such as the Grade 2 IRI programs), and with the research activities that are intended to shape and guide our program.

While we are satisfied with the way we have begun the program, we remain concerned about the potential that issues related to synergy and/or payments of per diem have to slow our work in the coming months. It will be critical that all mechanisms for dialogue and exchange (i.e. the consultative group on teacher training, the program technical committee, and the program steering committee at the cabinet level) function well so as to ensure that none of the ministry authorities feel excluded from the program's progress. In addition, it will be of assistance if, where possible, USAID can continue to pursue discussions with other donors around the question of how and when per diem for work within the ministry is advisable or allowable. Support on this sensitive question from both the donor community and the leadership of the MEBALN will go a long way in facilitating our work and, in the end, to ensuring the success of USAID/PHARE.

Appendices

Appendix A	Summary sheet and PowerPoint presentation of program
Appendix B	Minutes of Meeting with Counselor for Basic Education
Appendix C	Appointment of Technical Committee and Minutes of first two meetings
Appendix D	Circular letter from the DNEB re. place of radio programs in daily schedule
Appendix E	PHARE Program positions and staff
Appendix F	Powerpoint Presentation on Single Frequency Broadcast Options
Appendix G	Annual report of performance indicators – baseline