

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

**“Road to Reading”**  
**USAID / PHARE**

**3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTERLY REPORT**  
**(For the period of January – March 2009)**

May 5, 2009

Technical Assistance of Education Development Center/EDC

in collaboration with

RTI International (RTI)

Prepared by: Thelma Khelghati (EDC)  
Rebecca Rhodes (EDC)  
Wendi Ralaingita (RTI)

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**Transmission Confirmation**

**USAID / PHARE**  
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Presented to:

**Natasha deMarcken, CTO**  
**USAID Education Team Leader**

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date received: May 5, 2009

Submitted by: Thelma Khelghati, Chief of Party

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

## **Quarterly Report** **(for the Period of January - March 2009)**

### **I. Introduction and quarter highlights**

This quarter, program staff began technical work relevant to the 2009-2010 school year in earnest. Whereas during the previous quarter, senior management was focused on recruiting, hiring and providing initial training to staff, in this period personnel concentrated on laying the groundwork for new teacher professional development activities to be launched in the coming school year. Major accomplishments of the period include:

- Completing the standards framework for student performance in reading and writing
- Continuing research and analysis of data from the study on current teaching practices and learning opportunities in reading and writing in elementary school classrooms
- Designing and implementing a study on current practices in teaching reading in Mali's teacher training colleges (Institut de Formation des Maîtres / IFMs)
- Completing data collection in the IFMs related to installation of Virtual Training Centres (VTCs)
- Continuing broadcasting of Grade 4 radio programs over full national ORTM network
- Monitoring and evaluation mission on the use of the Grade 4 programs
- Establishing production cycle for level one<sup>1</sup> interactive radio instruction (IRI) programming
- Presenting the results of the feasibility study on establishing a dedicated radio frequency for the education sector
- Launching an implementation study by a Technical Team from Mali's Office of Radio and Television (ORTM) to determine infrastructure and equipment needs and the cost of a dedicated radio channel for education
- Completing adaptation to the Malian context of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) instruments in French for Grades 2, 4 and 6 and in Arabic for the medersas, Grades 2 and 4
- Training of enumerators for EGRA testing nationwide and launching of data collection
- Completing data collection for the environmental scan on use of technology in the education sector
- Initial training of teachers for a small pilot using "smart phones"
- Designing a study on Mali's medersas, developing instruments and training of enumerators
- Training of teachers and principals from 10 pilot medersas to use the IRI programs

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

Sylvaine von Mende	September 17 - October 14	EDC
Helen Boyle	January 8 - 19	EDC Home Office
Wendi Ralaingita	January 24 - February 14	RTI
Helen Boyle	March 10 - 19	EDC Home Office
Wendi Ralaingita	March 9 - April 11	RTI
Souhila Messaoud-Galusi <sup>2</sup>	March 24 - May 1	RTI

In addition, Sylvaine VonMende, the PHARE Reading and Pedagogy Specialist took up permanent residence in-country beginning January 6, 2009.

<sup>1</sup> Mali's six elementary grades are divided into three levels as follows: Level 1 = Grades 1-2; Level 2 = Grades 3-4, Level 3 = Grades 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> This mission was co-financed with the Hewlett Foundation. Approximately 20% of Dr. Messaoud-Galusi's time was devoted to PHARE.

This report covers the January - March 2009 period 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**

#### **Improved strategies / policies for improving teacher's career path (Sub-result 1.1)**

##### Development of policies to support decentralized teacher management

- Review literature on identified themes and develop research methodology

##### Development of competency frameworks for teachers and supervisors

- Validate standards frameworks for reading and writing

##### Revision of IFM Curriculum

- Consult with actors re. piloting the new IFM curricula

##### Development of package of support for IFM Professors

- Carry out study of teacher practices in IFMs
- Begin data entry and analysis

##### Establishment or upgrading of IFM Virtual Training Centers

- Complete inventory of existing technology at each IFM

##### Improving the teaching of reading

- Continue data entry and analysis of data from study on elementary teachers' classroom practice re. the teaching of reading and writing

#### **Improved instructional materials for elementary-level teachers and students (Sub-result 1.4)**

##### Broadcasts of Grade 3-4 Radio Programs

- Continue Grade 4 broadcasts
- Distribute Grade 3 cassettes to pilot schools
- Plan and carry out monitoring mission
- Collect from CAPs synthesis of monitoring reports received from principals

##### Developing radio broadcasts for Level 1<sup>3</sup>

- Continue process of producing scripts for Level 1 (masterplans, scripts, recording and formative evaluation, production of revised programs)

##### Improving broadcast quality nationwide

- Present results of feasibility study re. establishment of a dedicated radio frequency for educational programming to MEBALN and Ministry of Communications and New Technologies (MCNT)

##### Identify methods and partnerships for using technology

- Complete data collection for environmental scan re. use of information technology in education sector

#### **Improved systems for student evaluation (Sub-result 1.5)**

##### Improved early intervention evaluation system (EGRA)

- Finalize adaptations of Grade 2, 4 and 6 EGRA instruments in French

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<sup>3</sup> The programs currently under production are intended for use in Grade 1 in the classic schools and Grade 2 in the curriculum schools.

- Adapt Grade 2 and 4 EGRA instruments in Arabic for use in medersas
- Train enumerators and launch nationwide collect in a representative sample.

#### Conduct longitudinal research studies

- Train researchers and implement baseline studies

## **II. B. Actual Activities and Achievements**

### II.B.1. Policies and strategies in support of decentralization

Following the resolution of questions raised by the program's Technical Committee composed of Ministry personnel, program staff held preliminary internal discussions regarding the best ways in which to move forward with this result area. The program hopes that with the birth of the new decentralization program, and with the new leadership in place at the ministry, high-level policy dialogue and research will be easier to achieve. Nonetheless, as mentioned in the "remarks" section, the program staff are hopeful that we might redefine the focus of our policy-related work to be more directly related to the classroom environment than to teachers' career certification or to fiscal responsibilities of various government offices.

### II.B.2 Completion of standards framework for student performance in reading and writing

In February, program staff spent 2½ weeks in Segou to produce, with colleagues from both the DNEB/DEN and the CNE, a standards framework for student performance in reading and writing for grades one through six. This document seeks to capture the system's expectations of its enrollees in both reading and writing at all grade levels, and as such serves as a cornerstone both for all of the program's technical work and for the Ministry's planned reinforcement of students' reading and writing skills.

Developing this document was a challenge for several reasons. For one, as is true of many scholarly communities around the world, Malians have differing philosophies relating both to what languages should be taught (and with which intensity) and to what methodologies are appropriate for language instruction. In addition, only a very few ministry personnel have had any access to recent research on reading and writing development. As a result, most educators in Mali hold at least two (if not more) of the following assumptions:

- A child cannot learn a 26 (or 28, in the case of Bamanankan) alphabet in fewer than two years;
- A child must be able to read before he can write;
- A child should not make mistakes when reading aloud; reading silently will enable him to prepare himself to read aloud without mistakes;
- A child should not make mistakes when writing; he/she should only write words that he/she knows or has been taught, in order to avoid making mistakes;
- Decoding and reading are synonymous; if a child can decode a word, he has read that word.
- Children should not be expected to read or write until grade four or, (in the case of some educators) grade six;
- Reading a passage requires memorizing a passage; one is only able to read what one has a priori memorized;
- "Writing" is the equivalent of calligraphy (or handwriting); it is not a generative intellectual activity meant to support the sharing of ideas;
- Writing is best evaluated by determining whether a student can write a studied text from memory or can write what a teacher dictates; a student's individual thoughts or reflections cannot serve as the basis for an evaluation.
- A teacher must grade and correct all writing that a student produces.

In order to address these, and other assumptions, and in order to develop a set of standards that could assist Malian educators to consider modifications in their instructional practices, the PHARE staff in Segou organized the workshop to allow for a maximum number of learning activities for the

participants. Participants observed and analyzed classroom practice, reviewed and analyzed the curriculum documents available to them, reviewed and commented on examples of Malian students' work, followed "expert teaching examples" provided by program staff, and kept journals of their new learning about literacy and language acquisition.

Through these activities, the participants developed a standards framework that outlines nine competency areas (See list below). A child must develop competencies in all nine areas in order to read and write.

- Language mechanisms (i.e. sound-symbol associations, grammar, syntax, etc),
- Vocabulary and Lexicon (i.e. using words in context, deriving the meaning of unknown words from the meanings of known words used with it, finding synonyms and antonyms for different words),
- Fluency,
- Comprehension,
- Reading according to text conventions,
- Writing coherent text spontaneously,
- Mastering different writing styles,
- Writing with coherence and clarity, and
- Using text conventions (i.e. punctuation and spelling) when writing for a public audience.

For each competency area, participants worked in a collaborative fashion to develop:

- A definition for each competency area
- A set of performance standards for the end of each level of Malian basic education (levels I, II, and III) in each competency area, and
- Sets of performance tasks that could be attributed to students in each of the competency areas to enable teachers or other evaluators to judge a student's level in that area.

An example of one of the competency areas, as defined for the 1<sup>st</sup> level for curriculum schools, is found on the next page. The full document is included in Appendix A.

Participants at the Ségou workshop made a series of interesting recommendations, including:

- The need to re-read and revise the IFM curriculum and the elementary school curriculum to include the elements highlighted in the standards document;
- The necessity to provide teachers with a guide that would enable them to put into practice the kinds of instruction that would allow students to achieve the performance standards retained in the document;
- The need to provide teachers with training on the content of that guide
- The need to provide teachers with more strategies for formative and summative evaluation in reading
- The need to assist teachers to enrich the print environment of their respective classrooms.

These recommendations will in their turn assist the PHARE program to structure its work in the coming quarters. The validation of the standards document is expected to take place in April, after the school holiday, at which point the program will be able to elaborate the teacher performance frameworks and the guide book that will enable teachers to "bring the standards framework to life."

#### II.B.2 Revision of IFM Curriculum

No new activities were carried out during this quarter, although program staff continued informal discussions with the Head of Preservice Education at the Division of Teacher Education (DEN) and with the Head of the Curriculum Unit at the National Center for Education (CNE) Apparently

funding to carry out training of the professors who will be involved with the pilot has finally been released, and the training is currently scheduled to take place during the next quarter.

**Table 1: Sample page from Reading Standards' Framework**

Competency Area	Definition	Performance Standard <b>(The child will be able to):</b>	Performance Tasks <b>(The student):</b>
Language Mechanisms	<p>-The development of alphabetic, syllabic, and phonemic awareness</p> <p>-The development of the ability to use grammatical and semantic cues in reading</p>	<p><b>**Use reading strategies based on correspondences between sounds and symbols</b></p> <p><b>**Combine letters to make syllables and words</b></p>	<p><i>(In all languages)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies, names, pronounces, and writes (in capital and small letters) all the letters of the alphabet of a given language</li> <li>• Identifies sounds particular to national languages, and to French, and identifies those common to both languages</li> <li>• Identifies the initial and final sounds of a pronounced word</li> <li>• Puts 2 or 3 sounds together to form a word, for example: /p/ + /a/ + /t/ = patte</li> <li>• Puts 2 ou 3 syllables together to form a word, for example : /ma/ + /tin/ = matin</li> <li>• Can break a word into syllables and can count the number of syllables</li> <li>• Identifies words that rhyme with another word</li> <li>• Uses illustrations as a way to support phonemic awareness</li> </ul> <p><i>(In national languages)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puts letters of the alphabet together to form syllables and words</li> <li>• Replaces the first letter of a word by another letter to form another word</li> <li>• Identifies words that begin or end with the same sound</li> <li>• Replaces the first sound of a word with another first sound in order to form a new word</li> <li>• Puts a list of words in alphabetical order by first letter</li> <li>• Uses his/her phonemic awareness to figure out simple words</li> <li>• Finds a known word in a list of words</li> </ul>

### II.B.3 Study of practices in the IFMs re. teaching student teachers to teach reading and writing

In addition to the above mentioned study on instructional practices in elementary classrooms (see instruments and related documents in Appendix B, PHARE staff conducted a second study on the teaching of reading and writing pedagogy to student teachers in the IFMs. In association with the DNEB/DEN, the program interviewed 66 French literature professors and 74 psycho-pedagogy professors in all 12 of the country's IFMs. The mixed teams of researchers also interviewed all 12 directors of studies ("directeurs d'études). The goal of the research was two-fold:

- 1) to determine which members of the IFM staff knew about and were responsible for training student-teachers on the pedagogy of reading and writing and
- 2) where possible, to determine what methods were being promoted in the course of these trainings.

The study data is currently being cleaned and entered. However, preliminary results indicate that there is very little knowledge at the IFM level about research-based pedagogies for teaching reading and writing. For example, all 12 of the directors and all 12 of the directors of studies had no knowledge about the teaching of reading and writing pedagogy. A minority of the literature professors (2%) had some knowledge; for example they were familiar with the syllabic method used for reading and writing instruction in Mali since colonization. Slightly more than half (approximately 58%) of the psycho-pedagogy professors did have some knowledge either of the syllabic or global method. However, they explained that these methods are mostly taught by lecture, i.e. student teachers are not provided with intensive practice in applying them prior to their practicum. Although data analysis remains to be completed, all in all, program staff finished the data collection and entry phase of the research under the strong impression that reading pedagogy is not well mastered in the IFMs, and that student teachers have minimal or no opportunity to understand how to help nurture their future students' literacy once they are assigned to an elementary school classroom.

### II.B.4. Establishing and upgrading of IFM Virtual Training Centers (VTCs) (Result 7)

During the previous quarter, PHARE began on-site verifications of the equipment available for student use in each pre-service institute. In addition to physical counts and checks of the equipment in Kangaba, Kayes, Nara et Sikasso, PHARE staff interviewed the Director of the IFM and / or the person responsible for computer / information technology or, where established, the manager of the VTC. During this quarter, staff completed the inventory, covering the IFMs of Niono, San, Sevaré, Dire, Koro, Timbuktu, and Gao. The final inventory lists each piece of equipment, what software or accessories are used and the current condition of the equipment. This data provides the basis for planning upgrades to the existing VTCs and to creating new ones in all of the remaining IFMs.

### II.B.5 Study on teacher practices re. the teaching of reading

Last November, program staff interviewed 264 teachers and over 500 students about classroom practices in relation to the teaching of reading and writing. The questions and structure of the research paralleled the important competency areas eventually retained in the standards document, so that program staff and ministry partners could have a better understanding, by competency area, of the way that reading and writing is taught. (See instruments and other related documents in Appendix C) During the January to March quarter, program staff entered and cleaned the data from this study. Our preliminary read-through of the data indicates that:

- teachers have almost no opportunities for professional development centered on the teaching of reading and writing,
- teachers rarely employ techniques in their classrooms that would foster the development of children's reading and writing skills,
- teachers hold very low expectations for their students in terms of their mastery of reading and writing,
- students have little access to quality print materials of any kind, and

- students anticipate that either they or their friends will have trouble learning to read and write in elementary school.

The final analysis of this data will be available next quarter and will serve to guide and orient various training topics and interventions to be conducted in the 2009-2010 school year.

#### II.B.6 Broadcasting the Grade 4 IRI programs and continued piloting the Grade 3 programs

Broadcasts of the Grade 4 series, “Sur la Route de l’Ecole,” produced under the FIER program, began last quarter in December over the full network of the ORTM. By the end of this quarter, 20 of the 30 half hour programs had been broadcast.

Several visitors of note observed IRI in action in 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms during the quarter. On January 19<sup>th</sup>, the Minister of MEBALN, Aminata Sidibé Diallo, traveled to Kita to dialogue with local elected officials, school authorities and the local population about the status of education in Kita and the concerns raised by the forum. As part of her program, she visited the Segou Bougouni Public School where she participated in an IRI lesson. She was welcomed by the Director of the AE of Kita and several DCAPs from the region. Natasha deMarcken and Kadiatou Cissé-Abbassi of USAID also participated in the simulation, along with PHARE Chief of Party Thelma Khelghati, Deputy Director for Pedagogy Rebecca Rhodes and the PHARE script writing team leader, Moussadian Coulibaly.

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the American Ambassador, Gillian Milanovovic and her daughter who was visiting Mali participated in an IRI session at the Bangue Taba A (Public school) in Sevaré. In addition to school officials, she was greeted by the Director of the AE of Mopti, the DCAPs of Sevaré et Mopti, and numerous pedagogy counselors. The PHARE Chief of Party, Thelma Khelghati and the PHARE script writing team leader, Moussadian Coulibaly, assisted in the demonstration.

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, the PHARE program assisted USAID to host a visit from Lyla Bashan-Andrews of the Department of State. The purpose of the visit was to look at the use of the 1207 funds within current programs in Mali. PHARE’s Deputy Director for Pedagogy, Rebecca Rhodes, travelled to Mopti to receive the visitors and to demonstrate for them the use of interactive radio instruction in a typical Malian classroom. Since 1207 funds are intended to be used under the PHARE program to expand the use of interactive radio instruction to classrooms in medersas, the trip enabled the state department visitors to understand in more detail how radio technologies can enhance learning opportunities and improve the quality of instruction even in isolated environments.

#### II.B.7 Monitoring and Evaluation Mission - Grade 4 IRI

In March, the PHARE program sent the monitoring and evaluation team to the field to determine with greater accuracy the degree of usage of the radio programs. Teams travelled to 7 academies. In each academy, 2 CAPs were chosen and in each of those 2 CAPs, 4 schools were visited. In total, 70 AE and CAP representatives, 51 teachers, and 255 students were involved in the data collection for this mission.

The results from this monitoring and evaluation mission demonstrate that, by and large, the programs are well followed and well reported on in the field. For example, all supervisory personnel interviewed reported having visited a classroom using IRI since broadcasts began in December, 2008; 21.4% reported having made *more than* 10 visits to a school during that time. Similarly, 68.8% of supervisors consulted reported that the monthly reporting sheet distributed by PHARE was *always* turned in from the school to the CAP; another 12.9% reported that the sheet is *often* returned, while 1.4% said that it rarely is, 7.1% said that it never is, and 10% (many from the academy level) declared that they did not know. These reports indicate that a majority of supervisors have to some degree been following the program’s progress and that a large percentage of principals regularly report on the use of IRI programming in their schools.

The teacher and student sample was primarily, by design, a rural one; 78.4% of teachers interviewed and 82.4% of the students were from rural areas of the country. Given this factor, the high rates of participation reported at the school level were very encouraging: 99.6% of the students responding said that they listen to the broadcasts in class, with 78.8% of the student sample saying that they listened 2 times per week and 20.8% saying that they listened one time per week. Only .04% of the students said that they had never heard a broadcast. This was a much lower number than the program expected given some of the reports that program staff had received of listening difficulties. These numbers seemed to correlate with the teachers reported participation: 78.4% declared that they always used the broadcasts, and a further 7.8% declared that they often used them. Based on these data, program staff feel safe in assuming that the fourth grade broadcasts are reaching at least 80% of the targeted population this year.

Teachers reported receiving the broadcasts through various means: 54.9% said that they listened on ORTM shortwave, 15.7% reported receiving the broadcasts through an ORTM regional station, and 29.4% of respondents said that they could pick up the broadcast from a TV/FM relay. By and large, teachers found that the listening quality was acceptable or better; 78.4% said that the quality was good, 13.7% declared it to be acceptable, and 7.8% said that the listening quality was bad. Several teachers (56.9%) said that the speed of the broadcasts was too fast; this will be an aspect that the development team will have to continue to refine in the current year's productions.

The monitoring and evaluation team asked teachers whether they used the techniques modeled in the IRI lessons in other lessons or instructional units. The results of the teachers' self-reporting, captured in the table below, seem to indicate that the teachers are at least attempting to apply brainstorming and group work in their other classwork. While this data remains to be verified through independent classroom observations, it may be a good indicator of which of the active learning techniques modeled in the radio programs transfer the best into teacher practice without any other additional training or guidance.

**Table 2: Frequency of Teacher Use of Strategies Modeled in Grade 4 IRI programs**

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Brainstorming	35.3	51	5.9	7.8	0
Group Work	54.9	35.3	2	2	5.9
Physical Response	17.6	37.3	21.6	2	21.6
Role plays	13.7	43.1	19.6	2	21.6

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, teachers were very positive about the effect of the broadcasts on their students' learning. Of those queried, 98% said they believed their students liked the broadcasts a lot; 2% responded that their students liked the broadcasts moderately; 100% said that they believed the broadcasts helped their students achieve better results in French. These are very positive results from a group of teachers who, in the majority, are using radio programming in their classrooms for the first time this year.

The monitoring and evaluation mission did reveal some areas for further improvement. Some schools remain outside any current broadcast zone (in spite of the fact that the program contracted this year with the entire ORTM network), and some AEs and CAPs are not following up on the programs as closely as would have been ideal. This information highlighted the importance of finding responses to some of the broadcast challenges inherent in Mali's geography (see below) and the importance of reinforcing on-site follow-up and support for teachers once the program truly goes to scale in the fall of 2009-2010. All in all, however, program staff conclude that the broadcasting of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade programs this year has been a success, and that the AEs, CAPs, and schools are therefore better prepared than they would have been to participate in the level one broadcasts next year.

### II.B.8 IRI production for Level 1

Production of interactive radio instruction programming considerably advanced during this quarter, with program staff making several important decisions related both to the format and to the content of the series. These decisions included:

- Determining that the best production cycle would be to begin writing the radio programming for grade one
- Determining that the best way to “package” the IRI productions would be in groups of 240 programs for each instructional level (1, 2, and 3); this type of packaging should assist curriculum schools to use the product with fewer concerns about whether they can/should be introducing French in the lower grades;
- Identifying and placing on short-term contracts four actors (2 children and 2 adults) to play the roles in the first grade series;
- Identifying and placing on short-term contract two musicians to compose and record the music for the programs;
- Identifying a set of partner schools to the program where formative evaluation can take place on a regular basis.

As of this writing, the scriptwriting teams have produced initial drafts of the first 30 programs, 14 of which have been formatively evaluated and are in final production. The formative evaluations have demonstrated that the pedagogical grounding for the programs is very sound. The majority of adjustments required have to do with clarifying certain instructions to the teachers and/or slowing the delivery of certain portions of the script to enhance comprehension. The technical specialists have prepared 50 masterplans, giving the scriptwriting team ample material to continue scripting throughout the coming quarter. These masterplans will also serve as a basis for beginning development of the IRI classroom kits in the next quarter (See samples of master plans and scripts in Appendix D).

In order to support the intensive writing and production cycle, the PHARE program will work on putting in place a 2<sup>nd</sup> studio at the ministry beginning in the coming quarter.

### II.B.9 IRI Classroom Observations by Technical Team Members

During this quarter, program staff arranged for the program technical committee, composed of representatives of the DNEB, CNE, CPS and other ministerial divisions who work closely with the program, to visit 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in which interactive radio instruction was in use. The visits afforded those who had never seen this particular instructional tool in action an opportunity to witness how radio can support teachers in using student-centered instructional techniques and can foster student learning. The visitors returned to Bamako visibly impressed with their visit and the effect of IRI on classroom learning, and better able to comprehend the PHARE program’s plans to provide interactive radio instruction for all grade levels in Mali over the life of the program.

### II.B.10 A dedicated frequency for educational broadcasting

On February 23, the Secretary General organized a presentation to key personnel from the MCNT and other stakeholders of the results of the feasibility study regarding the establishment of a dedicated frequency for educational broadcasting. Participants included the Director of the National Radio and engineering staff from the ORTM, representatives of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Telecommunications Regulatory Committee (CRT) and the Union of Free Radio / Televisions of Mali (URTEL), in addition to heads of MEBALN divisions (See the report, letter of invitation, PowerPoint presentation and other related documents in Appendix E). The meeting was chaired by the Secretary General who voiced in clear terms the desire of the Ministry to move forward in securing a stable and sustainable mechanism for broadcasting to all schools in the country. The option which seemed most feasible is to establish an additional channel of the ORTM dedicated to educational broadcasting. This would require supplementing equipment and infrastructure at various sites, but would also allow the sharing of numerous resources. The group recommended establishing a working committee

composed of MEBALN and MCNT representatives who would decide on next steps. The working group recommended a complementary implementation study to be carried out by ORTM technicians to identify site by site exactly what equipment and/or infrastructure could be shared, what additional equipment and/or infrastructure would be needed, as well as actual cost and specifications.

Program staff met with the Director General of ORTM who designated a team of six technicians to carry out the study. Another ORTM engineer, in collaboration with program staff, developed terms of reference for the implementation study. Program staff met with the ORTM's designated technicians on several occasions to clarify expectations for the study which was launched on March 23rd. The program provided logistical support for the study. The ORTM technical team submitted a first draft of their report to the MEBALN and program for comment in early April.

#### II.B.11. Environmental scan re. information and communication technology (Result 4)

A critical part of the PHARE program's mandate is the development and implementation of pilot programming to evaluate the feasibility and scalability of different applications of technology to instructional settings. In October 2008, EDC staff member Dr. Harouna Ba in collaboration with program staff, launched an environmental scan of technology use in elementary schools in four CAPs (Baguineda, Diola, Segou, and Baroueli). In addition to speaking with representatives at each of the CAPs, the team visited 14 schools and interviewed 13 school principals, 36 teachers, 42 elementary school students, 28 secondary school students, and 2 cyber café managers.

These visits enabled the team to document that:

- few CAPs or schools have technology integration plans,
- where access and usage are evident in the student population, they are largely project supported,
- cost is a major prohibiting factor in spreading technology in education,
- where technology is present, users are charged a nominal fee in order to recover costs, and
- integration of existent technology with the curriculum is almost non-existent.

Based on these findings, the team formulated a few preliminary hypotheses about using technology in education, including that:

- the pilot programs put in place should not depend on EDM,
- any program will require a significant training platform to succeed, and
- any program that will eventually need to be taken to scale will need to be integrated with the ministry's sectoral planning related to the introduction and the integration of technology.

While these seem like sound assumptions, the program staff were concerned that a sample of only 4 CAPs and 14 schools drawn mostly from the south of the country did not constitute a large enough sample to be truly representative of the nationwide situation in current use of technology. For this reason, in December 2008 and continuing through the January to March quarter, PHARE expanded the sampling for the environmental scan to include 4 additional regions, 7 additional CAPs, and 21 additional schools. Program staff carried out data collection both independently and in conjunction with the IFM reading pedagogy practices study (See instruments in Appendix F). Data entry and analysis is currently underway. During the coming quarter, an initial report and recommendations will be produced and presented to the Ministry for comment and completion.

During this quarter, program staff also began discussions with the Ministry's Cabinet to define its vision for the use of technology in the education sector. For the moment, no policy documents exist that clearly describe the Ministry's expectations and plans for the integration of information and communication technology at all levels of the system. The PHARE program is hopeful that the new leadership of the ministry will be willing to examine seriously what kinds of financial resources at the ministry's disposition might be dedicated to supporting the introduction of technology into Malian schools.

#### II.B.12. Website for the DNEB

The PHARE proposal calls for providing web-based materials for use in the VTCs of the IFMs. A logical place for lodging such materials is on the website of the DNEB. However in recent years, there have been problems in maintaining and updating on a regular basis the website. In addition, the architecture of the site is in need of major revision. During this quarter, program staff participated in consultations with the DNEB/DEN and ACDI/PAMOEFE on renovation of the DNEB website. PAMOEFE had already planned to finance revitalizing the sign, but there were questions regarding overall design, management, maintenance and sustainability. As a result of these discussions, PHARE and PAMOEFE, in collaboration with the DEN, have committed to a joint effort to renovate the DNEB website. This shared effort will benefit all actors involved and will ensure a measure of longevity for the site.

#### II.B.13 One Laptop per Child

The program continued to hold discussions with the representative of One Laptop per Child in Mali. At the end of the quarter, the One Laptop per Child association submitted a proposal to EDC for possible funding. This proposal is under analysis and will hopefully, in revised form, provide the basis for an eventual cooperation between EDC and One Laptop per Child.

#### II.B.14 Smart Phone Pilot

The PHARE program this quarter launched a pilot program in the CAP of Kati for teachers to use “smart phones” to download and then experiment with educational content for their classrooms. In collaboration with the CAP, the program offered the opportunity to all of the 54 elementary schools in Kati to participate in the pilot, specifying that participation would not entitle any principals or teachers to any additional per diem. Nineteen schools responded positively, and both the principal and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher from each school were enrolled in the pilot program.

PHARE staff created a blog site (<http://sites.google.com/site/pharekati>) with several guiding documents posted on it: a calendar of when to teach the lessons, 4 science lessons based on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, and 2 full weeks of integrated language arts lessons (in reading and writing) for 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms (including a short text to use as the basis for reading assignments). The science lessons (developed by the Peace Corps Volunteer who was assisting the project with the Smart Phone pilot) focused on muscles, the skeletal system, and proper nutrition. The reading and writing lessons focused on short stories designed for the Malian context intended to help children think about and then write about their feelings in reaction to an event. Also posted on the site were feedback forms that the principals and teachers could use to send to project staff in Bamako, via text messaging, information on the lesson’s execution.

Once the pilot program content had been developed and posted on the website, program staff purchased telephones for use of the pilot program participants and arranged for those phones to have internet access. The program selected 20 Nokia E71 phones and 22 HTC phones (HTC is a manufacturer from South Africa), and decided that the Nokia phones would be given to the teachers while the HTC phones would be provided to the principals. A telephone was also to be given to the DCAP and to the CP assisting the experiment in the Kati CAP. Once the phones had been purchased, several meetings and technical sessions were held with staff at the Orange Corporation to work out the mechanics of operating the phones for the pilot. Eventually the phones were enabled with enough credit to access the internet on a regular basis to download information from the PHARE site.

The first training for the 38 participants and associated CAP personnel took place on the last weekend of March, with a full day devoted to the use of the telephones and another full day devoted to the lesson plans and calendar for their use that participants downloaded from the website. (See training documents in Appendix G). During that first training, almost all participants were able without difficulty to access the website’s content and to fill out the feedback forms. Some participants did have greater difficulty understanding the student-centered methodologies upon which the model lessons were based, and these required considerable practice before they could comfortably

implement the lesson instructions. However, all participants left the training enthusiastic and ready to participate in the pilot once the school spring break was over in mid-April. A second training is scheduled the first weekend in April to reinforce what was learned before actual implementation.

#### II.B.15. Improved early intervention evaluation system (EGRA) (Result 12)

In January, program staff completed data entry and analysis of the results of the pilot tests of the Grade 2 and 4 EGRA French instruments adapted for Mali. The purpose of the pilot phase was to ensure that the adapted instruments were valid. Numerous tests were run by RTI specialists, and the tests of validity showed similar, solid results to those found in other contexts. For example, student results showed reasonable patterns, where performance on one sub-test correlated to performance on other sub-tests, as should be expected.

PHARE held workshops in January and February in order to finalize the grade 2-4 French instrument. Based on results from the pilot, which indicated quite low levels of performance among both grade 2 and 4 students, the decision was made to revise the instrument to ensure that the reading passage and oral comprehension sections of the instrument corresponded to a grade 2 level in the Malian context. This would help alleviate problems of bottoming-out, but still allow ample room for growth considering expected baseline scores. The team referred to current grade 2 textbooks and curriculum to ensure that both the topics and vocabulary used were in keeping with material to which grade 2 Malian students would already be exposed. Three alternate forms of the reading and oral comprehension texts were developed and tested so that the forms for use in years 3 and 5 would be at the same level as that for year 1, but would contain different actual items.

During the February-March period, the teams also designed the grade 6 EGRA instrument. Given the low performance of students in grade 2 and 4, the EGRA development team decided that all of the lower sub-tests would be included in the grade 6 instrument, but that the reading text, oral comprehension, and MAZE comprehension measures would be adapted to the grade 6 level (again referring to levels existing in grade 6 texts and curriculum). Including these measures should alleviate potential problems of bottoming, while including grade 6 level texts will help to ensure that there are no ceiling affects. The grade 6 instrument was pre-tested in a number of schools in Bamako and results showed similarly validity to that found for the grade 2-4 test during the larger pilot.

While the grades 2,4, and 6 French tests were being finalized, the team also worked to adapt the Arabic EGRA (from a USAID-sponsored program in Egypt) to the Malian context. A first version of the instrument was pre-tested during the March enumerator training, and a number of issues were found – most of which corresponded to differences in instructions and structure between the Arabic and French versions. These differences were confusing to enumerators and would also make analysis difficult when used in the same context as the French instrument. Following this pre-test, an RTI consultant with prior EGRA adaptation experience, solid reading assessment expertise, and spoken Arabic, worked with the Mali Arabic EGRA development team, in a brief (2-day) follow up workshop, to address and correct the problems identified.

The general training of enumerators took place between March 23-31 in four training centers (Segou, Koulikoro, Douentza, and Bamako). The trainings targeted 120 pedagogy counselors from the 16 CAPs selected for the PHARE sample, as well as the 6 additional CAPs selected for the Hewlett / IEP evaluation in four national languages. The decision was made to use the pedagogy counselors from the CAPs and AEs as enumerators, rather than outside, hired consultants given the breadth of data collectors needed for the national sample and the fact that the program's implementation plan calls for the institution EGRA applications at the CAP level next year. A "training of trainers" workshop was held in Bamako from March 16-20. The selected trainers, who would also serve as supervisors during the nationwide data collection, were drawn from the CNE personnel and PHARE staff who had participated since November adaptation and piloting of the EGRA instruments. All of the trainings included practice in schools and inter-rater reliability testing.

Concomitant with the training, the PHARE staff and counterparts responsible for the Hewlett-funded EGRA testing worked intensively to develop and complete the sampling and logistics plans for the enumerator teams. CAPs were selected randomly (from among CAPs that include any curriculum schools using any of the four languages – Bamanankan, Bomu, Fulfulde, and Songhroy). Within each of these CAPs, classic, curriculum, and medersa schools were then selected randomly, for a total of 32 schools of each type. Within each school, 15 students from each target grade will be tested. Thanks to the joint decision to conduct all data collection concomitantly (See draft of the MOU in the Appendix H), the enumerators will be able to, in each curriculum school, collect data for grades 2, 4 and 6<sup>4</sup> in French, as well as in grades 2 and 3 in local languages<sup>5</sup>.

Sampling in Mali is always a challenge, as CAPs are often unable to reliably report whether a school is using the classic curriculum or is involved in the ministry of education’s curricular pilot. To facilitate proper sampling, the teams reviewed the school lists with the CAP personnel during the enumerator training, and provided each enumerator team with a list of replacement schools (also randomly selected) to use in case schools on the first list turned out not to fit the sampling criteria once the teams arrived on site (i.e. school must be teaching a certain kind of curriculum, must have grade levels 2, 4, and/or 6, must be a public school, etc).

The logistics plan also proved to be a challenge to develop. Due to the national census exercise and to elections, there were really only 3 weeks of the school year available for EGRA data collection: the last two weeks of April and the 1<sup>st</sup> week of May following the spring holidays. In order to reach the 218 schools in the final sample in that time period (including all PHARE classic, curriculum, and medersa schools, as well as all IEP target schools in the sample), 34 data collection teams were needed. PHARE staff worked intensively to place each trained pedagogy counselors into one of the four teams, to ensure maximum efficiency of travel and data capture. As of the conclusion of the reporting period, all teams were trained and prepared to collect data in the months of April and May.

#### II.B.16. Longitudinal research studies

Because of delays in finalizing the sub-contract with CAREF, it was decided to carry out the baseline data collection for the studies early in year 2009-2010. A number of consultations have been held with CAREF and the sub-contract should be in place early in the next quarter.

### **II.C. Concerns / Comments**

#### II.C.1 The program’s mandate in policy development and support of teacher career paths

As mentioned above, little progress has been made in this area. A combination of factors have contributed to this, perhaps the most significant one being that program staff are unclear what actions regarding teacher management or career path, would be most complementary and helpful in light of the multiple other initiatives in this domain currently underway in the country.

In the original scope of work, the program had proposed to conduct policy research and support to policy development in a number of areas related to decentralization. However, given that a new, large-scale USAID-funded program to support decentralization is about to come “on-line,” and that other donors, in particular ACDI/PAMOEFE, are involved in developing a teacher career path and teacher management at the decentralized level, in light of the significant challenges that the PHARE program is beginning to document as related to changing the quality of reading and writing instruction in the classroom, program staff feel that the policy portion of the PHARE program might best be focused on questions directly related to the efficacy of classrooms, and not to teacher management or career track. Interesting questions the program might look at include:

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<sup>4</sup> A good portion of Malian elementary schools do not have a complete cycle of all six grades. This is particularly true in rural areas. As such, when one of the targeted grade levels is missing from a school in the sample, enumerators will use a replacement school for the missing grade level.

<sup>5</sup> All testing in national languages is financed by the Hewlett Foundation.

- the policy for use of ICTs in schools,
- the coherence of the in-service and pre-service training policies,
- the training plan in reading and writing for teachers in the system and
- work on the curriculum at the primary level.

Although PHARE staff briefly discussed this issue with the Education Team at USAID at a meeting during the quarter, a more formal request needs to be submitted to USAID in the coming quarter.

#### II.C.2 Students' Standards Framework in Reading and Writing

In our last report, program staff raised concerns about the ownership of the standards framework by the Ministry. The workshop in Segou went a long way in creating both understanding and “buy-in” from key Ministry departments, in particular the DNEB and the CNE. program staff had hoped that validation of the framework would take place in March, and indeed, the Secretary General had send out correspondence inviting participants to a workshop on March 19-20, however, as program staff learned after the fact that many of the participants would be unable to attend because of the World Bank PISE evaluation that took place March 16-28. Because this was immediately followed by the national census, which used Academy and CAP staff, the validation workshop was rescheduled for April 16-17, 2009

#### II.C.3 Revising the IFM Curriculum

The Ministry did not pilot its new IFM curriculum during the 2008-2009 academic year, making work in this domain irrelevant during the school year. (Program staff did learn, however, that the CNE has received its funding to carry out the training of the concerned IFM professors). Program staff have requested that the ministry gather all interested actors (the CNE, the French cooperation, USAID, and ACIDI/PAMOEFÉ) together between now and June to prepare for the trial of the curriculum during the 2009-2010 school year. Hopefully, should such a meeting occur, the PHARE program would have a new opportunity to define how we can best support the development of the new IFM curriculum.

#### II.C.4 A dedicated channel for educational broadcasting

In addition to resolving the technical and cost issues associated with the dedicated channel for the MEBALN, there are essential questions of political will that need to be resolved at the ministerial level at the least. In late March, the PHARE team met with the Minister of MEBALN requesting her personal intervention with the Minister of MCNT (see background notes in Appendix I). Subsequent to our meeting, program staff received confirmation that the Minister of MEBALN did personally contact the Minister of MCNT to discuss the question of dedicated channel. However in early April by presidential decree, the Ministry was reorganized and a new Minister has been appointed. It will be critical to ensure the new Minister's support of this initiative before any progress can be made.

#### II.C.5 Environmental scan of ICT use

Before finalizing the results of the environmental scan, it will be important, during the next quarter, to involve staff from Mali's Agency for Information and Communication Technologies (AGETIC) and from the MCNT in the process. This might take the form of a round table discussion where preliminary data is shared and their recommendations recorded.

#### II.C.6. EGRA testing

Overall student performance in the pilot phase was quite low (See summary of results in Appendix J). For example, out of over 1000 children tested, 95.8 percent in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade could not read a single word in a level appropriate text; 64.9% of children in grade four could not either. Among those in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade who could read at least one word, they were able to read just 11 words per minute; of those in 4<sup>th</sup> grade who could read at least one word, they were able to read 22 words per minute. Although the pilot tests were not carried out in a representative sample, and the results should be viewed with a measure of caution, they still provide a hint of what might be found during the nationwide testing. If these results are confirmed, then only a minority of children will demonstrate mastery of reading competencies.

In addition to demonstrating a high likelihood of low scores prevailing in the national testing, the pilot testing phase proved conclusively that the baseline for French EGRA in curriculum schools in grade two is 0, and that it is not advisable to include the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade EGRA test in French in these schools. This decision enabled the EGRA teams to move forward with plans to only test 2<sup>nd</sup> grade French in schools using the classic curriculum.

#### II.C.7. Smart Phone Pilot

The PHARE program staff's first observations about the pilot experience to date are that it truly will be the cost of the technology (especially the phone-based access to internet) that will make it difficult to generalize the use of cell phones in Mali. At retail rates, the amount of credit required to stay on the internet over a connection through Orange is approximately 2500 francs for every two hours. These rates would only apply were teachers manipulating simple text documents like the ones used in the pilot; were teachers to access photos, videos, or diagrams, 2500 francs would not afford even that much connection time. Clearly this is an issue that will have to be addressed directly with the Orange corporation before any significant expansion of the smart phone pilot experience.

#### II.C.8 The best use of program resources for face-to-face teacher training and didactic materials support

Another subject broached with USAID informally during this quarter, but that will require a more formal proposal in the next relates to what approach we will use for providing face-to-face training for teachers and support for the use of the instructional materials introduced by the PHARE. The strategy described in the program's original scope of work, relied on principals to work on training all of their teachers, from grades one to six, on methodologies for improved reading and writing instruction, using the functioning "community of learning (CA)" mechanism as the primary venue for such school-wide training.

Since beginning work under PHARE, program staff have learned that the communities of learning are not nearly as widespread across Mali as is often assumed. Approximately 1,260 schools (or just 10% of the system) have functioning CAs. The lack of functional CAs in the other 90% of schools in the system makes it questionable as to whether program staff should build a face-to-face strategy on a mechanism that exists in a minority of schools.

More significantly, the research that program staff have conducted to date demonstrated that there are such serious misconceptions about reading and writing instruction in the early grades that the entire foundation for literacy is insufficiently laid at the start of the primary years. There is no curricular time specifically devoted to reading and writing, no appropriate supply of materials in the early years, and no mastery of appropriate methodologies on the part of the teaching corps. Our technical opinion is that this should be PHARE's first priority, and that our face-to-face training design should focus almost entirely on teachers in the early grades, providing them with a maximum of guidance and support. This shift in strategy will need to be approved by USAID and the Ministry in the coming quarter.

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

#### **III.A. Expected activities**

##### Adapt radio programs for medersa context

- Present PHARE program and its objectives to key actors and stakeholders involved with education in medersas
- Design and implement study on the current state of medersas in Mali
- Carry out training of teachers, principals and medersa CPs for pilot of the grade 3-4 programs in grades 5-6

### Partnerships to expand access to education

- Contact identified and potential partners

## **III.B Actual Activities and Achievements**

### III.B.1 Conducting outreach to the Medersa section of the DNEB and the Medersa Union

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, the PHARE program held a first formal meeting with the representatives of the DNEB's Medersa section, and with representatives from Mali's Medersas union. The objective of this meeting was to formally introduce the program to these stakeholders, and more specifically those interventions designed to impact the medersas directly. Arabic translations of the introductory program documents used at the official launching in October were provided to participants as background information. Following a PowerPoint presentation and period of questions and answers, discussion turned to the proposed pilot of IRI in a limited number of medersas and the planned in-depth study of the situation of medersas in Mali. Participants promised to make recommendations for schools to be involved in the pilot at a later date.

### III.B.2 Study to describe the medersas

In January, the PHARE Project Director from EDC's home office and Islamic Education Specialist Dr. Helen Boyle consulted with a broad range of stakeholders regarding the proposed study on medersas in Mali. Terms of reference for the study were distributed as well as draft copies of the instruments. Extensive consultations were held with the medersa section of the DNEB, with USAID and with concerned staff at the US Embassy concerning the study objectives and instruments. In all twelve instruments were developed, tested and finalized as follows:

- Interview form for Malian religious leaders (Ulaa'ama)
- Interview form for members of the Arabic section of the MEBALN
- Interview form for pedagogy counselors specializing in Arabic
- School proprietor interview form
- Principal questionnaire
- School resources checklist
- Teacher interview form
- Teacher questionnaire
- Teacher observation form and marking criteria
- Focus group form for parents
- Focus group form for students

The study, which is national in scope, will provide a summary of the current state of education in the medersas in Mali. Major themes addressed in the study are:

- History: Over time, how has the system of medersas in Mali developed to what it is today?
- Types and characteristics of Malian medersas: What are the types of medersas (or possibly of Islamic schools in general) that exist (i.e. fulltime day schools, after school/summer schools; those that teach a full spectrum of subjects; those that teach only certain subjects, those that teach children of all ages; those that focus on youth) and what are their basic characteristic? What grade levels do they serve? How many children are enrolled? What subjects are taught? What proportion of time is devoted to secular subjects and what proportion of time to religious instruction? Is the medersa sector growing? Are there regional growth patterns?
- Medersa governance (ownership and leadership): How are medersas established and run; how do they interact with local government education authorities and local communities; who has decision-making power/influence over hiring/firing, school policies, what is taught and how? How are medersas governed internally? How well are they managed? What is the role of the head master or principal? The proprietor? Parent committee? How best can Muslim

communities and leaders be involved in the planning and implementation of any recommended activities? Does the school have a charter? A school plan? How does the school define its mandate? What are medersa leadership's state priorities for the future? Is the medersa sector growing? Are there regional growth patterns?

- Financing of medersas: Where do financial resources come from, to whom are they given, how are they used? Do medersas cater to and provide services to poor families in particular? Are other donors supporting medersas? What type of support, if any, does the MEBALN provide to medersas? Do medersas charge tuition? How much on an annual basis? Is this prohibitive for students' families? Do medersas provide education free of charge to children whose family cannot afford to pay?
- Stakeholder and community perceptions: Do parents appreciate and approve of the presence of medersas in their communities; how does the larger community support/encourage the medersa; what are parents' comparative opinions about medersa and secular education; what are the Islamic school teachers' and administrators' perceptions of public education? How are medersas perceived within the Islamic intellectual community ('ulama) in Mali? Is there any particular socioeconomic group served more frequently or prominently by medersas?
- Teachers: Who is hired to work in a medersa, what qualifications and experience are required, how are teachers trained? What are the professional expectations and goals of medersa teachers and how do they compare to public school teachers? Are there sufficient teachers in medersas across all subjects?
- Students: How many graduates do the medersas produce, what are graduate expectations and aspirations? Do students come predominantly from one socioeconomic group? To what extent do medersas allow poor children to attend for free? What types of other educational or professional opportunities do they pursue, etc? Do medersas take care to specifically ensure that the needs of girls are addressed?
- Effectiveness and Impact: How does the quality of education provided in Islamic schools compare with that provided by secular government and private schools? How do pedagogical practices and learning outcomes in medersas compare to those in public schools? What types of subjects are covered at different grade levels? What is the situation with regards to classroom size, the rate of girls' attendance, the availability of learning materials such as textbooks?
- Formal Education Linkages: How are medersas contributing within the general education system? What kind and level of education are pupils receiving? How are the schools supporting Mali's Education for All (EFA) commitments? Are graduates of medersas able to easily transition to mainstream schools? How frequently do these transitions occur? How do medersas interact with the MEBALN? What level of integration is there between MEBALN schools and structures and medersas? What sorts of support and services do medersas receive? What are MEBALN perceptions of medersas? What is MEBALN's level of involvement with medersas? What are MEBALN priorities for medersas?

Data collectors for the study were recruited using a general position announcement in the local papers; close to 100 applications were received for 18 available positions. PHARE staff reviewed and ranked the applications according to the following criteria: a) Bilingual ability; b) Prior research experience; c) Prior consulting experience; d) Availability. Through this process, the team was able to select a group of 17 men and 1 woman able to devote the majority of the months of March to May to conducting the research in the medersa schools.

The 18 data collectors participated in intensive training, under Dr. Boyle’s direction, on the data collection instruments in mid-March. The training session provided them with a general refresher on key concepts related to qualitative research (i.e. interview protocols, consent procedures, instrument reliability and validity), and then provided them with in-depth practice with each of the instruments developed for the study. Program staff identified test medersas in Bamako where the teams could travel to use the instruments, enabling the trainees to benefit from practice in real-life situations. Based on trainees’ observations and comments, some minor modifications were made to the instruments during the two-week training period.

Also during March, the program finalized school selection for the medersa study, retaining 101 randomly selected medersas in 39 CAPs based on updated lists provided by the CAPs. Travel itineraries, budgets and other logistical concerns for each of the 9 teams were addressed. At the close of the quarter, all of the medersa teams were ready to launch the study in mid-April immediately following the Easter vacation. Copies of the terms of reference for the study, final versions of the instruments, the list of schools in the sample and other documents related to the study are found in Appendix K.

### III.B.3 Piloting the use of IRI in Mali’s medersas (Result 16)

Subsequent to the formal presentation meeting described above, program staff held a number of working sessions with the representatives of the DNEB’s Medersa section, and with representatives from the Medersas’ Union. Discussions centered on the best manner in which to introduce radio programming into Mali’s medersas. The use of the radio programming in the medersa context is delicate in two ways:

- school authorities and teachers must feel comfortable with the content of the programming, and
- the programming needs to be appropriate for the children’s level, in a context where children do not begin French instruction until the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

The group decided that the available 3<sup>rd</sup> grade programs should be piloted in medersa 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms, and that the available 4<sup>th</sup> grade programs should be piloted in medersa 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. As a result, at the end of February, the PHARE team trained 10 French teachers from medersas in Bamako, Kati, and Koulikoro to use the grade three and four broadcasts on cassette in their French classes in their respective medersas. The purpose of this activity is to enable the program to evaluate, on a limited scale, what the best application will be for the use of radio programming in the medersa context. The list of medersas involved in the pilot study is as follows:

**Table 3: Medersas in IRI Pilot**

<b>Academy</b>	<b>CAP</b>	<b>Medersa</b>
Bamako Rive Gauche	Diélibougou	EL Ouloum El Islamiya (Diélibougou)
	Hippodrome	Elhilal El Islamiya (Hippodrome)
	Centre commercial	Institut Yattabare (Missira)
	Lafiabougou	EL Imame Kamapo (Hamdallaye)
Bamako Rive Droite	Torokorobougou	El Mohamadiya (Torokorobougou) Naharou Djoliba (Badalabougou)
	Banankabougou	Manar Dine (Sogoniko)
	Faladjè	Sabil Assada (Niamakoro)
Kati	Kati	Dar Elcourane et Hadiss (Kati)
Koulikoro	Banamba	Dar Elcourane et Hadiss (Touba)

During the training, which was modeled on the training provided to elementary principals and teachers in November, the teachers, their directors, and several pedagogy counselors responsible for supervising the medersas learned more about the PHARE program's goals and work plan, and were asked to practice using the interactive radio programming and the accompanying guide. PHARE staff also provided a correspondence document for the medersa teachers to help them know at what point in their curriculum they could most profitably use the radio programs as they are recorded. At the conclusion of the training, all teachers committed to experimenting the programs in their classrooms. PHARE will organize follow-up visits to the medersas and their teachers between now and the end of the school year to study how the radio programs currently under development can best be introduced in the medersa context.

#### III.B.4. Participation in meetings related to the one classroom schools' initiative (Result 7)

During the course of the quarter, the PHARE program provided technical assistance to the ministry's one-classroom schools initiative. In January, the Ministry, using funding provided from the Hewlett Foundation through the Malian NGO OMAES, organized an initial training for teachers from 5 schools, and for their pedagogy counselors, in Segou. Senior PHARE staff member Youssouf Haidara attended this training, as did Salif Sogoba, in order to orient the one-classroom school teachers to their tasks and to the material that the Ministry made available to them. The same staff members also participated in a follow-up mission conducted by the department intended to support the teachers on site in taking on their new roles as lead pedagogues in the one-classroom schools. Our participation in these activities this year will facilitate our efforts in the 2009-2010 school year to support the one-classroom schools in a more intensive manner.

#### III.B.5 Partnerships to expand educational opportunities (Result 22)

##### *III.B.5.a Peace Corps*

In January, the PHARE Deputy COP held an information session with approximately 25 interested Peace Corps volunteers during their in-service training event. The PHARE program had prepared a number of informational hand-outs for volunteers, and had ample information available as to how volunteers could participate in supporting this program. Eleven volunteers agreed to serve as "monitoring specialists" in their sites after the briefing session, and have been sending in information regularly as to how the broadcasting is (or isn't) being used in their sites. PHARE is hopeful that we might expand this collaboration with Peace Corps in the coming program year.

##### *III.B.5.b Public / Private Partnerships- Hewlett Foundation*

The sampling and logistical planning for the EGRA exercise was facilitated by the development of a memorandum of understanding between EDC, the prime contractor for PHARE responsible for the EGRA testing, the Hewlett Foundation, (a separate funder providing monies both for a four-country study of reading success in local languages and for a program evaluation of a separate program in country known as "read-learn-lead"), and RTI, International, the contractor responsible for all 3 testing administrations. According to the clauses in this memorandum of understanding, the 3 parties would work closely together both in the EGRA training and planning phases, and in the data collection phase, to minimize duplication of effort on the ground in country and maximize the use of logistical and financial resources. The parties to the MOU also guaranteed that the joint effort would provide Mali with rich and easily comprehensible data sets that would enable the government to have on hand for easy reference baseline information on children's current abilities in reading and math. The development of the MOU in and of itself was a 6-month process, requiring input and understanding from multiple representatives of the different institutions involved. None of the associated writers had anticipated, when they first began working on it in November, that it would take that long to produce the final document. However, the discussions about the MOU and the related testing details did enable the teams to design as streamlined a process as possible for data collection. As of this writing, the MOU has been presented to USAID and the associated partners are awaiting further instructions from the mission regarding the finalization of the document.

### **III.C Concerns / Comments**

#### III.C.1 Working with medersas (Result 16)

Our initial contacts with actors in the medersas have been encouraging. The majority of medersas contacted have been receptive to working with the program, and have been eager to receive training and pedagogical materials. We do hypothesize, however, as planned under the contract, that medersa teachers will need to be provided separately with the material that will enable them to use the programs; i.e., we do not believe that the medersas will be able to organize their independent French teaching schedules to use the radio broadcasts at the same time as other public schools (since their French teachers are not always present in the course of each school day all day on campus).

### **IV. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### **IV.A Expected activities**

##### Monitor implementation of Grade 3 & 4 IRI

- Collect from the CAPs, summary reports of monitoring data received from principals

##### Develop final version of monitoring and evaluation plan

- Prepare revised draft of plan for submission to USAID

#### **IV.B Actual activities**

##### IV.B.1 Monitoring data from the school level

As was the case under the FIER program, PHARE staff have monitored the use of the radio programming for 4<sup>th</sup> grade largely through report forms completed by school directors and returned to their respective CAPs. The program regularly receives report forms from approximately 2/3 of the CAPs nationwide. After the close of the school year (during the April-June quarter), program monitoring staff, all of whom are currently consumed by the EGRA exercise, will work to consolidate the information from these reports and to determine exactly the percentage of usage per CAP of the radio programs to date. The program is examining the possibility of putting a protocol in place with AEs and CAPs to support the more regular synthesis of listenership and participation data in the 2009-2010 school year.

##### IV.B.2 Revision of the program's Performance Monitoring Plan

Following receipt, during this quarter, of the USAID Education Team's comments on the Performance Monitoring Plan submitted with the BAFO proposal, a series of meetings were held to revise and finalize the plan. The senior management team, working in close collaboration with the monitoring and evaluation team, adjusted the indicators and targets based on guidance received from USAID. The revised draft, which was near completion at the end of the quarter, will be submitted early in May.

### **V. Management and Administrative Issues**

#### V.A. Technical Committee Meetings

Throughout the quarter, the PHARE program staff met once a month with the members of the program's technical committee to keep them informed about program activities and to solicit their input on the program's actions. The various divisions of the DNEB and the CNE, as well as the CPS and the CADDE, are all members of the technical committee. The technical committee, which is chaired by the deputy director of the DNEB, serves as the program's main mechanism for exchanging with these multiple actors at once, and is a key element in offering the various portions of the department the opportunity to comment on PHARE's activities. (See minutes in Appendix L)

#### V.B. Personnel Issues

A number of important legal and administrative requirements regarding personnel were completed during this quarter:

- election of personnel delegates
- registration and approval by the Labor Office of 95% personnel contracts
- approval by the Labor Office of the Human Resources Section of the program's Policies and Procedures Manual
- registration and payment of income and social security taxes.

Some questions have arisen regarding the current market value and equity considerations of senior management salaries that will need to be addressed in the next quarter.

#### V.C. Staff retreat / Team Building

By January 2009, staff numbers were near our target for hiring technical and administrative personnel. Program staff had grown from 6 temporary and 2 full time employees in August 2008, to 36 full time staff. Aside from the challenge of where to provide office space for everyone, there was a need to build a shared vision of who we were as a program and what it was that we were jointly to achieve. Most of the staff had not yet been hired at the time of the official program launching in October 2008, and although briefing and orientation documents had been shared with them, the senior management team felt it was important to provide all staff members with a comprehensive view of the aims and objectives of the program. In addition the management team wanted to provide opportunities for staff to know each other better, engage in team building activities, jointly define the operating values under which the program would operate, delineate lines of communication and functioning and address a number of internal administrative and personnel issues. As such, February 2-3, program staff held a staff retreat for all employees at the Mande Hotel. The event was successful, program staff all left with a greater sense of cohesion as a team and clarity about our work. The retreat also provided an opportunity for key actors from the Ministry (i.e. the Secretary General, the Counselor responsible for Basic Education, the DNEB, and representatives from the DEN and CNE) to learn more about the program's technical work and to mingle with the program staff.

#### V.D. New Office at Bamako-Coura Bolibana

As mentioned in our previous report, following discussions with the Secretary General of MEBALN regarding the need for additional office space for the program, PHARE was given the office building occupied by a PNUD sponsored decentralization project which ended in October 2008. The building was in need of repairs and with assistance from the Building and Infrastructure Section of the Ministry, Repairs and painting were completed in January 2009. At the beginning of February 2009, program staff transferred the financial and administrative offices of the program to that site, along with the Monitoring and Evaluation Team and RTI staff. The technical offices of the program remain at the Division of Teacher Training (DEN) across from the National Museum. The move relieved some of the serious overcrowding at the DEN site. In addition, program staff were given the former World Education Office at the DEN and are temporarily using one room in the PAGEEM project building. Program staff expect that additional office space will become available when the new studio is built.

#### V.E. External relations and communications

The Deputy Chief of Party for Administration and Partnership engaged in consultations with the staff member at the cabinet level responsible for communications in order to encourage greater participation in relevant program activities and for his presenting to the media, as appropriate, program activities in the context of support for MEBALN priorities. A draft communication plan was developed with a private vendor, which takes into account ongoing possibilities for free press coverage (Journal parlé et magazine) as well as more specialized opportunities.

## Appendices

- Appendix A Standards Framework in Reading and Writing for the Elementary Grades
- Appendix B Documents re. Study of Reading Pedagogy Instruction in IFMs
- Appendix C Documents re. Study of Elementary Teachers Practices re. Teaching of Reading
- Appendix D Sample Master Plans and Scripts for Level 1
- Appendix E Documents from Presentation of Feasibility Study on Dedicated Radio Frequency
- Appendix F Revised Instruments for Environmental Scan on ICTs in Education
- Appendix G Training Documents for Smart Phone Pilot
- Appendix H Draft Memorandum of Understanding with Hewlett Foundation
- Appendix I Background Notes / Minister of MEBALN's Consultation with Minister of MCNT
- Appendix J Summary Results of EGRA Pilot Testing of Instruments
- Appendix K Documents re. Study of State of Medersas in Mali
- Appendix L Minutes of PHARE Technical Committee Meetings