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“Road to Reading”
USAID / PHARE

SIXTH QUARTERLY REPORT
(For the period of October – December 2009)

February 4, 2010

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I. Introduction and quarter highlights

This first quarter of the second year of the PHARE program was rich in activities and intense in the rhythm of work. As it coincided with the beginning of the academic year, the program began implementing, at the school level, a number of innovations designed to improve the quality of literacy instruction in the early grades.

Major achievements in this quarter include:

- Testing and completing the interactive multimedia modules for use in training professors and their student teachers in Mali's Teacher Training Colleges (IFMs)
- Completion of the bidding process for installation of the first group of Virtual Training Centers (VTCs) in the IFMs
- Finalizing all of the interactive radio instruction programs
- Printing the teacher's guides that accompany the interactive radio instruction programs
- Creating and distributing classroom kits for use with the interactive radio programming
- Training personnel from the 15 education regions (Academies d'Enseignement / AEs) and 70 education districts (Centre d'Animation Pédagogique / CAPs) to train principals and teachers on the use of the interactive radio instruction (IRI)
- Supervising the training of principals and teachers from over 7000 schools on the use of the interactive radio programming
- Presenting the balanced literacy approach for improving literacy instruction at the elementary level to Ministry of Education authorities
- Training the personnel of the Academies and CAPs to train teachers and principals in the use of balanced literacy
- Completing the analysis and publication of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) results for French and Arabic
- Conducting a briefing and consultative meeting with key actors in Islamic and/or Arabic language education, preparatory to expanding the use of IRI in medersas
- Preparing reports on each of the PHARE indicators and completion and implementation of the PHARE program manual for monitoring and evaluation.

In addition, in the course of the quarter, the program staff received and provided support for an audit team from the Inspector General's office in Dakar, continued to participate in meetings related to the third Education Sector Investment Program (PISE III) development process, continued to meet regularly with the program's technical committee in the ministry, and attended USAID and/or Ministry of Education organized meetings and events as needed.

The following consultants supported program implementation during this period:

Norma Evans	September 7 - October 30, 2009	EDC
Suheila Mesahoud	November 14 - 19	RTI
Carmen Strigel ¹	November 15 - 19	RTI
Jennifer Spratt	December 9 - 10, 2009	RTI
Norma Evans	December 10 - 22, 2009	EDC

This report covers program implementation during the October to December period of 2009. It is organized thematically under the broad intermediate result areas. Expected activities are based on the Year 2 Workplan.

¹ Expenses covered by Hewlett funding

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 for the quarter by sub-result

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

- Validation of terms of reference for two policy studies on “time-on-task” and on the linguistic needs of the system

Improved pre-service and inservice teacher training (Sub-result 1.2)

- Revision of IFM Curriculum
- Development of package of support for IFM Professors
- Establishment or upgrading of IFM Virtual Training Centers (VTCs)
- Improving the teaching of reading

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

- Broadcasts of Grade 1 Radio Programs
- Development of radio broadcasts for Grade 2
- Support to Committee charged with pursuing a dedicated channel for educational broadcasting
- Identify methods and partnerships for using technology

Improved systems for student evaluation (Sub-result 1.5)

- Present results of baseline testing using EGRA instruments
- Disseminate results of EGRA testing

II.B. Actual Activities and Achievements

II.B.1. Sub-result 1.1: Improved educational policies and strategies

In September, USAID/PHARE submitted a list of potential policy study topics to the ministerial committee in charge of the research platform for the PISE III. Of the topics approved by the committee, two were selected for implementation: a study of the time students spend on task in Malian classrooms, and a study of the predominant language spoken in school communities among students and teachers. Based on recommendations from the meeting in September, USAID/PHARE staff made adjustments to the studies’ terms of reference. The adjusted terms of reference will be presented to the same ministry committee during the next quarter.

II.B.2. Sub-result 1.2: Pre-service and inservice teacher training

II.B.2.1 Finalizing the multimedia modules for training the IFM professors

In October, program staff spent a week in the Teacher Training College / Institut de Formation des Maîtres (IFM) of Niono with representatives from the National Directorate of Basic Education (Direction Nationale de l’Education de Base / DNEB), the Division of Teacher Education (Division de l’Enseignement Normal / DEN), and the Higher Institute of Teacher Education (Ecole Normale Supérieure / ENSUP) in order to finalize the seven multimedia modules on reading and writing pedagogy. The Virtual Training Centre (VTC) in Niono² hosted the workshop, and participants used the USAID-purchased material in those centers to work their way through the seven modules. Each module is interactive, and therefore, by virtue of working through all of them from start to finish, each

² Established under the FIER program

participant in the workshop received a solid introduction to the principles of balanced literacy instruction. (See training guide and other documents in Appendix A)

The workshop was organized such that all participants worked in pairs to complete one module, and then provided the PHARE program team with feedback on the content, volume, and feasibility of the interactive exercises proposed. Participants were particularly pleased with the activities that asked them to define certain concepts in their own words, to identify a classroom sequence that corresponded to a concept just explained, and to discuss an idea with their partner. Feedback included observations such as: “the content of these modules is much richer than that offered in our methods courses,” and “we have never experienced teaching like this before.” By the end of the workshop, the participants had approved all of the modules and were looking forward to assisting the PHARE program staff in introducing them to the IFM professors around the country. These trainings are scheduled for the next quarter.

II.B.2.1 Selecting a provider for the installation of the virtual training centers

During this quarter, PHARE constituted a commission composed of program staff, representatives of the financial and administrative direction of the ministry, and representatives of the DNEB to evaluate the submissions of over 20 companies that had replied to the call for bids published for the establishment of PHARE’s first five virtual training centers. The bids were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- a) the conformity of the technical detail with the requirements listed in the call for bids;
- b) the prior experience of the companies in completing similar types of work;
- c) cost realism, and;
- d) cost-effectiveness.

The Commission selected three vendors. Two of these were asked to resubmit their financial offers, reducing the overall cost. In the end, the company ImpactDev was selected to conduct the installation of the VTCs in the IFMs of Kangaba, Bougouni, Tombouctou, Niono, and Sikasso. The VTCs will each have 24 computers³ in addition to a printer, scanner, digital camera, and other equipment to facilitate learning about the teaching of reading and the use of technology in schools. PHARE signed the contract with ImpactDev in early January and expects installation of the equipment for the centers to commence in February 2010. Similarly, in the January to March quarter, PHARE will organize the training for the management committees in the 5 VTCs, as well as make plans for installation of the second wave of VTCs (7 additional) in the remaining months of 2010.

II.B.2.3 Launching the “In the Land of Reading” broadcasts

PHARE’s signature activity in this quarter was the launching of the “In the Land of Reading / Au pays de la lecture” broadcasts and the training of thousands of education personnel nationwide in their effective use.

The PHARE broadcasts targeted in this cycle every public and community school in every CAP throughout the country (approximately 7000). In every region, two days of training were offered for four CP generalists and one Arabic-language CP from each CAP, for the accountant from each CAP, and for the education and accounting personnel in each academy (the heads of the curriculum and basic education units, as well as the financial manager for each academy). Copies of the training guides and other related documents are included in Appendix B. The training included theoretical background on the important aspects of the year one programs (phonemic awareness, sound-symbol relationships, emergent writing, and key aspects of comprehension) as well as training and practice in following the directions in the radio programs and using the elements of the kits with the radio programming. The training also included sessions on filling out and returning the director’s monthly

³ 12 of the computers are the N-computing configuration.

report forms,⁴ in order to provide essential data to the CAPs and regional offices on the use of the programs in the schools. Finally, for the financial staff of the AEs and CAPs, break-out sessions were provided on managing the finances of the trainings. The PHARE program transfers the money for schools in a given region to the academy in that region and then works in partnership with that academy to ensure that the money is distributed to the district offices in that region. To ensure that a written trace of money transfer is established each time funds change hands, and to ensure that there is conformity between the attendance sheets in the trainings and the payment sheets for each training session, PHARE developed a financial guidelines package for the accounting staff of the academies and the CAPs, which detailed how both materials and funds were to be distributed and accounted for. With the help of this set of financial guidelines, PHARE staff successfully trained all 70 CAP level and all 15 academy level accountants in the management of the USAID funds dedicated to the expansion of the PHARE programming. A table showing the numbers of people attending the training of trainers' events on IRI is included below:

Table 1: Participants in IRI Training of Trainers Sessions

Institution	Education Staff	Accounting Staff	TOTAL
Academy Rive Gauche	3	1	4
8 CAPs (Rive Gauche)	40	8	48
Academy Rive Droite	3	1	4
4 CAPs (Rive Droite)	20	4	24
Academy Douentza	3	1	4
4 CAPs (Douentza)	20	4	24
Academy Gao	3	1	4
4 CAPs (Gao)	20	4	24
Academy Kati	3	1	4
6 CAPs Kati	30	6	36
Academy Kayes	3	1	4
5 CAPs (Kayes)	25	5	30
Academy Kidal	3	1	4
2 CAPs (Kidal)	10	2	12
Academy Kita	3	1	4
4 CAPs (Kita)	20	4	24
Academy Koulikoro	3	1	4
4 CAPs (Koulikoro)	20	4	24
Academy Koutiala	3	1	4
3 CAPs (Koutiala)	15	3	18
Academy Mopti	3	1	4
5 CAPs (Mopti)	25	5	30
Academy San	3	1	4
3 CAPs (San)	15	3	18
Academy Segou	3	1	4
5 CAPs (Segou)	25	5	30
Academy Sikasso	3	1	4
8 CAPs (Sikasso)	40	8	48
Academy Tombouctou	3	1	4
5 CAPs (Tombouctou)	25	5	30
TOTAL	395	85	480

⁴ The PHARE program worked with the staff of the DNEB to develop a version of the standard director's monthly report that would incorporate information both on the use of radio and on the use of other technologies. The PHARE program reproduced these report forms as a booklet for the school directors in order to facilitate their completion of the information and their submission to the district offices in the system.

Once the regional and district level staff were prepared to deliver the trainings on the use of the radio programming and monitor the finances accompanying them, PHARE staff and CAP counterparts entered an intensive planning phase of preparing for the district level trainings. Districts were required to submit detailed, by-name lists of participants (one director and one teacher) from each **public** and **community** school in their region. (Private schools are not a target group for USAID/PHARE and staff of the medersas will be trained separately during the next quarter). Each school name, each name of a teacher, was checked and double-checked by the PHARE personnel. Participants per CAP were sorted into training sessions of not more than 80 people each (40 people per training room in each of the two training rooms per CAP), to ensure that training quality would not be affected in CAPs with large numbers of schools. Pedagogical counselors were each assigned to specific training sessions to ensure that all counselors for each district bore some responsibility for the successful outcome of the trainings. Radio and printed announcements were distributed in each district to provide the timing of the trainings to the teachers. Finally, approximately two weeks after the training of trainers sessions, each CAP launched its training series for the schools in its area.

In order to provide further quality control, USAID/PHARE staff supervised one training in each CAP, a practice whose inconveniences in terms of cost and time are far outweighed by the advantages in ensuring that the training content and materials are correctly delivered to the school level. PHARE staff observed a day of training in each site, inventoried materials (radios, kits, posters) on site, and had the DCAP and the pedagogical counselors fill out a questionnaire relative to the quality of the training. The questionnaire included items related to pedagogical concepts (i.e. "Was the training session on emergent writing correctly and successfully delivered?"), on materials distribution (i.e. Were there enough radios present so that each curriculum school would receive one), and on finances, (i.e. Did each participant receive the forfeit of 5000 francs CFA for his/her transport to his school?). Wherever PHARE staff encountered problems or misunderstandings (e.g. they observed that the pedagogical counselors had not correctly mastered a concept, that materials were lacking, or that the accountants were unsure of the amounts to be paid for per diem, lodging, or transport), they provided additional direction and support on site to resolve the issue. As a result, each of the 70 CAPs was able to conduct its training sessions with a high level of participation and success. When broadcasts were launched on the 23rd of November, teachers across the nation were well- prepared to begin using them to reinforce their students' reading and writing skills.

Throughout the training cycle, the PHARE program associated colleagues from the DNEB/DEN and from the CNE in an effort to continue to build ownership for the use of radio in primary school classrooms. DNEB/DEN and CNE personnel participated with each training team during the training of trainers' portion of the cascade, and during the quality control missions to the CAPs, both institutions were again represented. Each traveling PHARE staff member was accompanied by a ministerial colleague. This approach enabled the program to demonstrate to a wide-range of central actors first-hand the benefits of the interactive radio programming broadcast to Malian classrooms.

Based on an analysis of the monitoring sheets distributed at the IRI training of trainers, the PHARE monitoring and evaluation staff conducted an evaluation of the quality of the sessions offered. In general, participants were highly satisfied with the quality of the content, and with the quality of the training staff. Areas where participants requested changes or adjustments included, most often, the length of the training; (there was a consensus that this should have been longer), as well as, in some cases, the availability of materials (bloc notes, pens, etc) for the participants.

The monitoring and evaluation team is currently in the process of compiling the data from the trainings of the teachers and principals. USAID/PHARE can report that there were a total of 203 training sessions across the country. A training session included a maximum of 80 participants, split into two groups of 40 (and using the two training rooms of the CAP). The table below reports how many sessions of training were held in each of Mali's 70 CAP.

Table 2: Distribution of IRI Training Sessions per CAP

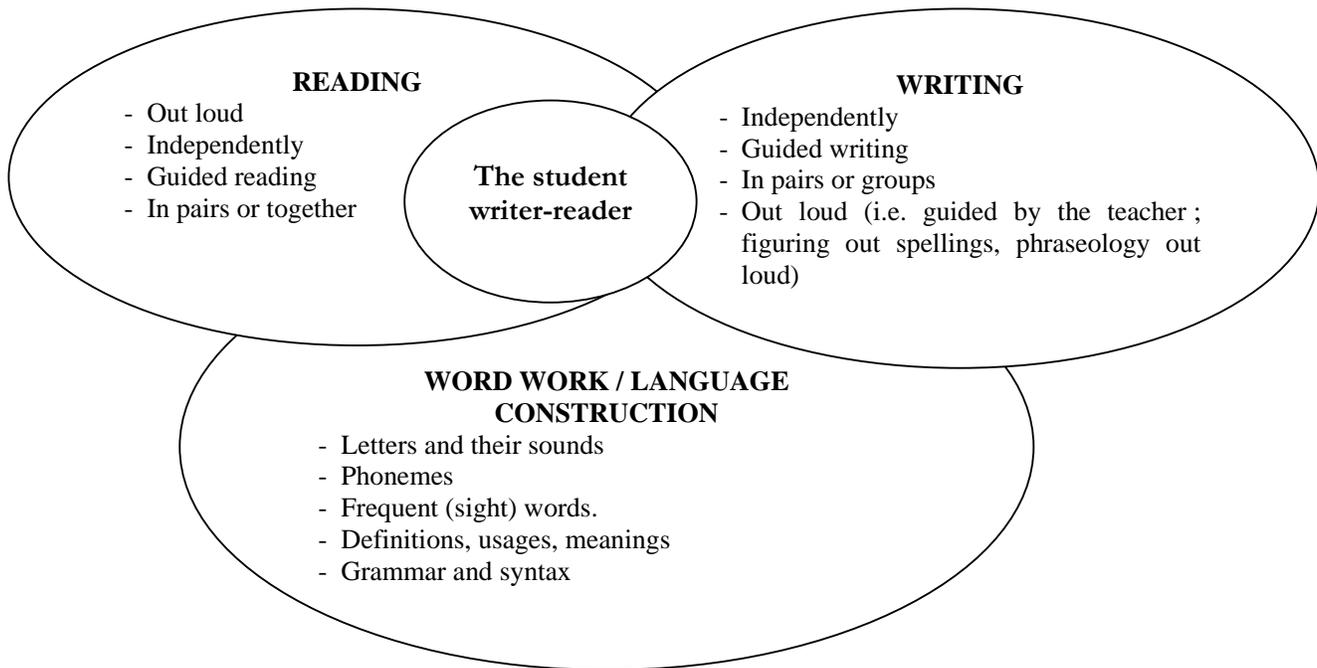
CAP	No. of Sessions	CAP	No. of Sessions	CAP	No. of Sessions
AE de Bamako Rive Gauche		Baguineda	3	Youwarou	2
Banconi	2	Total - Kati	22	Djenne	3
Bozola	1	AE de Kayes		Total - Mopti	13
Djelibougou	1	Kayes RD	3	AE de San	
Hippodrome	1	Kayes RG	4	San	4
Lafiabougou	2	Yelimane	3	Bla	5
Centre Commercial	1	Nioro	3	Tominian	3
Bamako Coura	2	Kenieba	5	Total - San	12
Sebeninkoro	2	Total - Kayes	18	AE de Segou	
Total - Rive Gauche	12	AE de Kidal		Segou	4
AE de Bamako Rive Droite		Kidal	1	Macina	3
Torokorbougou	2	Tessalit	1	Baroueli	3
Faladie	1	Total - Kidal	2	Niono	3
Kalabancoura	2	AE de Kita		Markala	4
Banakabougou	1	Kita I	3	Total - Segou	17
Total - Rive Droite	6	Kita II	3	AE de Sikasso	
AE de Douentza		Diema	4	Sikasso II	3
Douentza	3	Bafoulabe	5	Yanfolila	4
Bankass	4	Total - Kita	15	Kadiolo	4
Bandiagara	3	AE de Koulikoro		Kolondieba	5
Koro	3	Koulikoro	3	Bougouni	4
Total - Douentza	13	Kolokani	2	Niena	3
AE de Gao		Banamba	3	Koumantou	4
Gao	3	Nara	2	Total - Sikasso	31
Ansongo	3	Total - Koulikoro	10	AE de Tombouctou	
Menaka	3	AE de Koutiala		Tombouctou	3
Bourem	3	Koutiala	3	Dire	3
Total - Gao	12	Yorosso	3	Goundam	2
AE de Kati		Mpessoba	2	Nianfunke	3
Kati	5	Total - Koutiala	8	Rharous	1
Kalabancoro	3	AE de Mopti		Total - Tombouctou	12
Kangaba	3	Mopti	3		
Fana	4	Sevare	3		
Dioila	4	Tenenkou	2	Total sessions	203

Assuming conservatively, that 70 people attended each session (rather than the 80-person maximum), USAID/PHARE trained approximately **14,210** people in the use of Interactive Radio Instruction during the months of October and November. Additional data on the district level portion of the training cascade (i.e. exact teacher numbers, an analysis of participants' feedback relative to the quality of the training), will be included in the April, 2010 quarterly report.

II.B.2.4 Launching the face-to-face training series in balanced literacy

The second major component of USAID/PHARE's teacher training interventions is the face-to-face training series in balanced literacy instruction. Balanced literacy instruction is a research-based approach to fostering children's reading and writing skills that is completely congruent with the principles retained in the MEALN's standards framework for reading and writing. In balanced literacy instruction, based on formative evaluation of children's skills, the teacher creates a blend of reading, writing, and language mechanics activities that reinforce the full range of reading competencies.

The components of a balanced literacy program are often diagrammed as follows:



Balanced literacy differs fundamentally in its assumptions from the practices and techniques for language work observed in most Malian classrooms. Some of the most salient differences include:

- The premise that reading and interacting with text is a **much broader** undertaking than understanding or using the “building blocks” of the language (i.e. word construction). Balanced literacy methods expect teachers to both provide children with mastery of those building blocks, and to go beyond that mastery to exploration and enjoyment of level-appropriate literature.
- The premise that writing (i.e. translating one’s thoughts and feelings into text) and handwriting (i.e. forming letters in print and cursive or penmanship) are two distinct skills. Good handwriting, though important, is **not** a skill to be particularly targeted during reading and writing lessons (it may be targeted at other times in the school day).
- The premise that writing (i.e. translating one’s thoughts and feelings into text) is an activity that children should be engaged in on a regular basis *while* they learn to read (not after), and that working with language to write one’s thoughts reinforces one’s competencies both in language mechanics and in reading.
- The premise that competencies related to the three domains (reading, writing and word work/language construction) should be taught such that all domains receive equal and integrated focus in the course of a given lesson. Most Malian teachers tend to teach reading in isolation from word work and rarely teach writing.
- The premise that all children acquire essential reading competencies in different ways and at different speeds, and that it is the constant task of the teacher to modulate his/her instruction within the three domains shown above such that his/her students have sufficient opportunity to practice all of those competencies. (Many teachers around the globe believe that one can design a “one-size-fits-all” reading program that will work infallibly for any child. However the theories of language acquisition in which balanced literacy instruction is grounded hold that this is impossible).

Training in balanced literacy is a long-term undertaking. Research demonstrates that most teachers progress from being a novice to being an expert in the use of balanced literacy techniques over a series of months or even years. USAID/PHARE has organized its training design for balanced literacy in Mali according to the following elements:

Table 3: Training Design for Balanced Literacy by Topic

LEVEL	TOPICS ⁵
PHARE Balanced Literacy Level One :	Mali’s benchmarks in reading and writing according to the standards framework (standards frameworks) Using writing to support reading Learning through language games
PHARE Balanced Literacy Level Two :	How to design balanced literacy instruction for your classroom Locally-made materials for Balanced Literacy Instruction How to conduct guided reading in your classroom
PHARE Balanced Literacy Level Three:	How to conduct guided writing in your classroom How to evaluate students’ reading and writing progress Gaining the support of the school administration and the community for balanced literacy instruction

PHARE’s training interventions with teachers and students in the second and third trimesters of the school year in support of balanced literacy will focus on the level one activities, namely:

- a) knowing and understanding the standards frameworks,
- b) encouraging students to participate in invented (emergent) writing, and
- c) using a games-based approach in the classroom.

PHARE targets training over 6000 teachers and principals in these topics in the 2009-2010 school year beginning next quarter. As per USAID’s approval, PHARE will focus uniquely on teachers from grade one and two classrooms in this first training cycle. In preparation for this training cycle, during the month of December, directly following the completion of the training program for teachers in IRI, the PHARE program provided training for the pedagogical counselors from all of the CAPs on the principles of the Balanced Literacy Level One topics (See training guide and other related documents in Appendix C). As with the IRI trainings, PHARE regrouped by region the four general and one Arabic-language pedagogical counselors from each CAP and provided them with five days of training on the standards frameworks, on emergent writing, and on the games that form the basis for the mastery of phonemic awareness and sound-symbol correlations. Participants had the opportunity to experience several activities recommended in the standards documents for verifying whether or not children have mastered a certain competency; were invited to compose paragraphs *in a language not their own* relative to their experiences as a teacher (in order to experience first-hand what it is like to attempt to compose from scratch in a language that you don’t master); and played a series of games from hangman to “the trainer against the participants” (a game similar to the French game “Pigeon Vole” wherein the teacher names objects or letters on the board and the class repeats, but only repeats if the teacher provides the correct name to begin with).

Also during the five days, counterparts from the Institute of Popular Education (Institut de l’Education Populaire / IEP) that accompanied the PHARE trainers, provided an introduction to the use of the “Read/Learn/Lead (Ciwaras Lisent- CL) materials that IEP has developed for the teaching of reading in the national-language classrooms. The CL materials offer a phonetic approach to the learning of

⁵ One topic may require several training sessions.

reading that is consistent with the first of the 9 competency areas (language mechanics) included in Mali's standards framework for reading instruction. The CL method includes seven steps, as follows:

- 1) Rereading yesterday's text
- 2) Phonemic awareness
- 3) Phonetic awareness (sound-symbol correspondence)
- 4) Decoding
- 5) Recognizing sight words in today's text
- 6) Expressive reading of today's text
- 7) Independent reading of today's text

For teachers in level one of the curriculum schools, the CL materials represent a rich resource for providing children with practice in word work and language construction. PHARE intends, during the second step of the cascade, to introduce the use of the CL materials in all of the curriculum schools, as a means of assisting them to begin supporting their students in acquiring the competencies laid out in the framework.

By the end of the five days, the pedagogical counselors and the Academy and CAP directors, who had attended the sessions, were considerably better prepared to train their teachers and principals on the principles of balanced literacy, once the 2nd level of the cascade is launched.

During the quarter, technical staff also focused on the question of exactly *how* to select schools for the implementation of balanced literacy training. Whereas PHARE's expansion of the use of Interactive Radio Instruction is nation-wide, the balanced literacy trainings are to be offered, at first, to a subset of the schools in the system. This will permit the PHARE training team to refine the trainings to an even greater degree, and will also enable the academies and the CAPs, providing field support to literacy instruction, to have a less burdensome follow-up task at the outset. Because PHARE targeted a smaller sample of schools for the balanced literacy instruction trainings, the team had to decide how the schools would be selected. Would CAPs be allowed to designate them arbitrarily? Would PHARE staff try and identify the most enthusiastic listeners to the IRI programs and offer the balanced literacy trainings to them? Was there a model that would enable school directors to apply directly for the trainings, based on announcements distributed throughout the system?

In the end, the PHARE program opted for offering the opportunity to attend training to all public and community primary schools around the country. In December, PHARE broadcast announcements on the national radio channel / ORTM inviting all public and community schools to apply for participation in the balanced literacy trainings. Interested schools were to send letters to their respective CAPs indicating their desire to participate. PHARE also developed with the DNEB a letter to this effect, and distributed that letter throughout the system. This principle of volunteerism is an important one in reforming reading and writing practice, as a school where the principal and/or his personnel is enthusiastic about participating in the program, will be more likely to make needed adjustments to ensure the quality of reading and writing instruction (i.e. according the teacher more flexibility in his/her timing of activities, working to acquire and share books at the local level, etc). As of this writing, over 3,500 schools have applied to participate. In the coming quarter, the AE and CAP personnel trained in balanced literacy in December will train principals and teachers from these schools on the "Balanced Literacy Level One" topics.

At this time, the PHARE contract does not have sufficient funds budgeted to provide for an extensive face-to-face training for all grade one and two teachers in the schools that have applied. For this reason, personnel from schools that have applied to the balanced literacy instruction will be trained using a hybrid model that combines CAP-based training with school-based reinforcement. In February, principals and teachers will attend a 2-day training at the CAP facilitated by the CAPs that the PHARE program trained in the month of December. During the CAP-based training, they will receive self-study materials, including a cassette and workbook, for use at the school level. In

addition, they will meet at the school-level at least three further times in the course of the semester to study the materials provided. These meetings, which will function somewhat like the CAM meetings, can serve to begin a tradition of school-based in-service training that is highly coherent with the procedures laid out in the Ministry of Education's strategic plan for inservice education, and may lead to the eventual establishment of CAMs.

II.B.3. Sub-result 1.4: Development of interactive radio programming, other technology innovations for classrooms, and instructional materials

II.B.3.1 Level 1 IRI radio broadcasts

During October, PHARE staff put the finishing touches on the last of the radio programs for the year, and delivered the first set of completed programs to the ORTM for broadcast. PHARE staff met with the Director of the ORTM, the Director of the National Radio and the Commercial Director in mid-November to review the requirements of the contract and the differences between the nature of the programs this year and those broadcast in previous years.⁶ In addition, staff collected bids and selected artisans and printers for producing the materials to be distributed to the teachers and principals during the IRI trainings. These materials included:

- Alphabet boards prominently displaying the letters of the alphabet, placing the consonants in one color and the vowels in another
- Kits made of special printed "USAID/PHARE" cloth that contained a teacher's guide for the IRI programs, word cards, alphabet cards, a cassette of songs and rhymes from the radio programs
- A series of 6 posters per classroom, printed in recto-verso, with the words of the 12 songs from the year one Interactive Radio Instruction series in large print.
- Radios for curriculum schools.⁷

In December, in preparation for delivering the face-to-face trainings in balanced literacy to be organized next quarter, the PHARE program selected a printer and signed a contract to print:

- the standards frameworks for both curriculum and classic schools
- the guide to balanced literacy instruction
- the storybook that provides first grade teachers with texts appropriate for use with young children.

II.B.3.2 Support to the Ministry Committee developing the National Education Radio Channel

In October, the committee charged with developing the National Education Radio Channel met to work on and review the tripartite accord that the three ministries involved (education, communication, and territorial administration) are due to sign. This accord will lay the groundwork for sharing the responsibility and resources necessary for the creation of the channel. In addition to working on this accord, the committee also reinitiated the correspondence to the Ministry of Communications and New Technologies.

II.B.4. Sub-result 1.5 Student Evaluation Systems

Disseminating the Early Grade Reading Assessment Results

During this quarter, the PHARE program completed the report summarizing the results of the baseline EGRA testing in French and Arabic and officially presented the results to two important groups of actors: the Minister of Education and his extended cabinet and the education sector technical and financial partners (cadre partenarial).

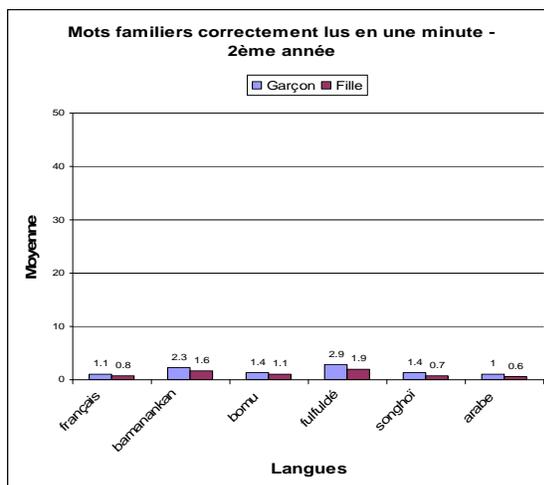
⁶ Programs in previous years did not build sequentially from one to the next.

⁷ Last year's distribution of radios only included classic schools.

Scheduling these two presentations was much more of a challenge than had been anticipated. One factor was the need to coordinate with personnel of the Hewlett Foundation, since the reports of both the USAID-funded EGRA evaluation in French and Arabic, and the Hewlett-financed EGRA evaluation in Bamanankan, Fulfulde, Songhai and Bomou, were to be presented at the same time. The dates were modified often, either as a result of delays in producing the final version of one or other of the reports, changes in the Minister’s schedule or constraints related to the work schedules of the consultants supporting the activities. At last, the first presentation to the Minister and extended cabinet was held on November 19th and the second, to the regular meeting of the technical and financial partners, on December 10th.

Considerable staff time on the part of the PHARE team in Bamako and the RTI personnel supporting the activity was devoted to final proofing and polishing of the final reports as well as creating concise, clear PowerPoint summaries for the two critical audiences. Main objectives of both presentations included:

- Demonstrating the connections between Mali’s student standards framework for reading and writing and the sub-tests of the EGRA tool;
- Demonstrating that the sample size and the methodology had been sufficiently rigorous so as to render the data highly valid;
- Demonstrating that across a range of key competencies, children are not mastering the necessary competencies to become fluent and autonomous readers;
- Demonstrating that this phenomenon holds true across all the languages studied;
- Highlighting the conclusions that the Department and its partners can draw from this experience, and;
- Providing recommendations for next steps.



Both presentations were interactive and well-attended. In the meeting with the Minister and his cabinet, participants were particularly interested in the methodology used and in some of the definitions of terms in reading and writing that were new to them. For example, the data presented on children’s ability to write led to a discussion wherein the PHARE technical staff had to offer an impromptu demonstration of the differences between writing (as a means of expressing your thoughts) and penmanship (as a discipline requiring the proper and beautiful formation of letters). In the meeting with the donors to the Ministry of Education, interest was keen around the fact that the low scores seemed constant across the languages. Participants in both the cabinet and donor meetings were interested to know what external factors, (socio-cultural-economic and/or family/school environment) contributed negatively or positively to the results. Although results were cross-tabulated with a few environmental factors such as attendance at pre-school, the presence of books in the classroom, being read to either at home or at school and having homework assignments, analyzing these factors was not the primary purpose of the tests. Rather it was to describe the level of student performance in targeted competency areas. In general in both meetings, participants and decision-makers found the results alarming and were unanimous that the situation is one which requires urgent interventions as well as concerted efforts on the part of all actors to increase children’s chances of learning to read early on in the primary cycle.

It is noteworthy that the Minister himself presided the meeting of the extended cabinet and that he stayed to the end of the approximately 1 ½ hour presentation. He ended by saying, “The ball is now in our court.” PHARE staff and a Hewlett Foundation Representative also met with the Minister and

several of his Counselors for about an hour around noon the same day as the afternoon presentation. PHARE personnel briefly presented the EGRA results and the interventions PHARE is putting in place to improve reading and writing in the early grades.

Key recommendations that came from these two events included:

- Finalizing the training and classroom materials in development at the DNEB/DEN for the introduction of balanced literacy into Malian classrooms
- Integrating in the PISE III documents financial and technical support for the expansion of these documents throughout the education system
- Sharing the results of the EGRA studies with a wide group of actors at the central and decentralized levels
- Organizing further information-sharing and reflection sessions for those interested in learning more about the EGRA exams.

The USAID/PHARE program will be working to act on these recommendations in the coming quarter.

II.C. Concerns / Comments

II.C.1 Studies in the policy area

PHARE is behind schedule in implementing the policy studies that were planned for this year. Although broad terms of reference have been developed for submission to the ministry committee charged with approving them, the implicated PHARE staff were also involved in the intensive preparations for and delivery of the nationwide trainings that took place in the last quarter. As such, they were unable to devote sufficient time to this domain. The training demands of the coming quarter are less intensive, and we expect to be able to move forward on the two studies.

II.C.2 Training of IFM professors and revision of the IFM curriculum

The training of IFM professors has also been pushed back. Although the training was originally scheduled to take place in December, ENSUP professors were not available at that time and other scheduling conflicts made it impossible to do so. In the interim, the Head of the Division of Teaching Training asked that we reconsider the training model, suggesting that the trainings take place on site at each IFM rather than bringing all the professors to one location. PHARE is considering this proposal and the requirements of implementing the training in this manner.

At the same time, almost no progress has been made on pilot testing the new IFM curriculum. The CEPEC-Lyon is the lead technical partner supporting the Ministry's efforts, but since the late August / September workshops, nothing has moved forward. Certain organizational questions remain to be resolved between the Ministry and the implementing partner, but the end result is that almost no progress has been made to date on piloting the new curriculum, and we may go another full year without it being implemented. We continue to dialogue with the concerned actors and continue to push for a round-table discussion of all concerned to ensure establishing clear guidelines and to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the various actors.

II.C.3 IRI broadcasts

PHARE has had very positive comments from teachers, principals and pedagogical counselors regarding the Level 1 broadcasts on the air. Children are enthusiastic, teachers and principals are pleased to see children learning, and the pedagogical counselors are witnesses to the changes taking place. In one incident, a child became ill at school and when his mother came to pick him up, he asked if she would please wait until after the radio broadcast. In another, teachers commented that their first grade students knew the alphabet and corresponding sounds better than their older brothers and sisters in the upper grades.

PHARE is working to address the situation of schools that are not receiving the broadcasts. Based on reports received from the majority of CAPs, approximately 1000 schools do not have access to the broadcasts. PHARE has ordered MP3 players and 4 GB USB keys to be distributed to these schools. The full 120 programs will be loaded on to the USB keys, thus giving these schools a means to benefit from the programs.

II.C.4 Effective training of teachers nationwide

PHARE staff sometimes find it challenging, with the number of activities and the geographical reach of the program, to work in as much depth or detail as necessary to ensure lasting change in teacher practice. The original model conceived did not include grouping teachers for direct face-to-face training nor extensive follow-up at the school level, other than through the principal. PHARE has felt it important to go forward with direct training of teachers supplemented by school-based training, especially in the first two initial years of expanding IRI and introducing the balanced literacy approach. However this model is not sustainable for the life of the program. We are currently in the process of exploring how best to meet the training needs of teachers, ensure quality, depth and sufficient school-based support, yet operate within the budget limitations of the contract.

II.C.5 Coordinating dissemination of the EGRA results

It is important that Malian actors not be confused or overwhelmed by the plethora of actors wishing to discuss the results of the EGRA exams and the next steps. A dialogue around this question that is too diffuse will not bear technical fruit. The Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Hewlett Foundation and the program has enabled coordination on test administration and the presentation of results. We are continuing dialogue on how best to go about disseminating the results to a wider audience and hope that we will still be able to speak with “one voice.”

II.C.6 Coordinating with the PRADDE-PC program

In the long-run, it will be helpful to set up a standing consultative mechanism with the PRADDE-PC program, not only around our joint indicators, but to ensure greater synergy between our various interventions. PRADDE-PC and PHARE have an opportunity to effect substantial positive change in the districts where they work together, but only if their activities and inputs are coordinated. We will pursue contact with the PRADDE-PC leadership in the next quarter.

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

The sub-results under Intermediate Result 4 focus on supporting populations that have specific educational challenges or currently have difficult access to formal education. These populations include children in Mali’s medersas, children in isolated rural areas and children with special needs.

III.A. Expected activities

- Complete descriptive study of current state of Mali’s medersas
- Establish criteria for selecting medersas to be included in the IRI program expansion
- Select vendor for purchase of MP3 players
- Create partnerships to expand access to education

III.B. Actual Activities and Achievements

III.B.1. Sub-Result 4.1 Improving Instruction in Mali's Medersas

III.B.1.1 Consultations with medersas sector actors

During the quarter, PHARE personnel consulted with key actors from the medersa sub-sector to continue moving forward with the selection of medersas to participate in the expanded use of IRI in this academic year. In November, PHARE organized a day of reflection with representatives from the DNEB's medersa section, with actors from the National Union of Medersas, and with representatives from the DEN to review the progress made in working with the 10 pilot medersas last year and to determine what the strategy would be for expanding the program's interventions in medersas in year two. At this meeting, PHARE shared the summary report on the IRI pilot with all actors present, and asked for suggestions on a strategy for achieving a successful expansion from 10 medersas to more than 750. The following steps were recommended as a strategy:

- a) Retain the three Academies (Kati, Koulikoro, and the Rive Gauche) that had participated in the pilot use of the radio programs in 2008-2009
- b) Consult the list of medersas per Academy and retain up to 4 other Academies as a function of the academies having the highest numbers of medersas
- c) Develop, after this research, a preliminary list of academies and CAPs on which to focus during 2009-2010
- d) Organize a meeting with other members of the medersas union (both from Bamako and the interior), as well as other key actors in the Islamic / Arabic education sector, to present the PHARE program's activities and to share the provisional list of Academies and CAPs to be included in the expansion and the recommended selection criteria.

The larger meeting with approximately 50 principal actors in the medersa education sector took place on the 27th of December, 2009 at the Bamako International Conference Center. The meeting was opened by the Interim Director of the DNEB and included representatives from the medersas' section of the DNEB, the executive office of the National Union of Malian Medersas, selected regional offices of the National Union of Medersas, the High Islamic Council, the executive offices of the National Union of Muslim Women, selected regional offices of the National Union of Muslim Women, and certain school directors that participated in PHARE's 2008-2009 activities with the medersas. Representatives of the five Academy regions, provisionally selected as focus areas for this school year (Sikasso, Segou, Koulikoro, Kati, Bamako Rive Gauche, and Bamako Rive Droite), also attended. The specific objectives of the meeting were to:

- a) Invite the participants to share their own observations in relationship to the current teaching of reading and writing in the medersas
- b) Share with participants the results of the pilot experience conducted in medersas in 2008-2009
- c) Share with the participants the pedagogical importance of the radio broadcasts and the balanced literacy approach
- d) Share the USAID/PHARE program's suggestions for the criteria to use in selecting medersas for inclusion in the expansion this year and seek the feedback and commentary of the participants.

The exchanges at the meeting were lively and positive. Union members unfamiliar with the program's activities asked pertinent questions about the reasons for choosing radio as a medium of instruction, about the content of the programming, and about the differences between teaching a language (i.e. Arabic) and teaching to read. Several venerable members of the union offered their endorsement to USAID/PHARE's activities, stating firmly that improved French instruction in the medersa context would be of benefit to the children therein enrolled and would not be in contradiction with any of Islam's religious principles. By the end of the day, participants had agreed that USAID/PHARE should, indeed, expand its work to the CAPs in the suggested regions based on the

selection criteria proposed with a few amendments. The group recommended that single sex medersas be allowed to participate in the program rather than limiting it to medersas with mixed gender enrollment and that French teachers with a poor level of French be accepted in the program, (with PHARE providing training to these teachers to increase their language abilities). The endorsement of this important group of medersas' actors will facilitate PHARE's continued and expanding work to improve the instruction of French in Mali's medersas.

III.B.1.2 Continuing data analysis for the medersa study

Coding of the data from the medersa study, which had been put on hold during the finalization of the EGRA reports and the launching of the IRI trainings, continued in the month of November, with the monitoring and evaluation team spending a week coding and entering data from the study questionnaires. Based on the volume of work remaining to complete the analysis and generate the report, the program hired a short-term consultant to assist with the statistical analysis of the data. The new target date for the completion of all of the analyses (which has been much delayed due to other, more pressing program deadlines) is early March 2010.

III.B.2. Sub-Result 4.2 Participation in the MEALN's Planning and Supervision Activities Related to the One-Classroom and Mobile Schools

Revitalizing the MEALN committee for one-classroom schooling

The PHARE program staff also, in December, held two important work sessions with the MEALN technical committee charged with the experimentation of the one-classroom school model (Ecole à classe unique / ECU). Following the unfortunate accidental death of the committee chairman over the summer, little work had been done to continue creating a one-classroom school model appropriate for the Malian context. At PHARE's initiative, the committee reconvened twice during this reporting period.

During the first meeting, members conducted an inventory of the situation in Mali's one-classroom schools at this time. Mali has six schools that are labeled as ECU: one in Gao, Missira and Jawanebugu in Kati, and Toune 1, Toune 2, and Dorola in San. As of the first trimester, all 6 had opened, but not all 6 were engaging in instruction for all 6 grade levels. Follow-up visits to these schools will be planned in the next quarter to better observe the quality of instruction and collect up-to-date data on student enrollment and attendance.

At the second meeting, the committee reconsidered what Mali's model of an ECU should be. Through the discussions at this meeting, the group reaffirmed that the definition of an ECU is as follows: "an instructional system in which a teacher educates at the same time students of different ages, levels, and abilities." They determined that ECUs have the following characteristics: local enrollment, simultaneous courses, one teacher per school, local contracting of the teacher, and decentralized management (i.e. they have a large degree of autonomy in determining their course hours and their rhythm of work). The group identified three possible types of ECU: sedentary (implanted in one single village), semi-mobile (varying between two or three known sites along a route frequented by the community), and mobile (following the nomads in their movements).

Criteria for establishing an ECU were discussed. It was determined that:

- An ECU can be established in a village or encampment that has never had a school
- An ECU can be established in a village or encampment where children of at least 3 different grade levels travel to another village school at a considerable distance from their encampment
- The distance covered by the children is considered punitive by the parents
- The community is able to offer a building or temporary shelter for the ECU
- A teacher is identified
- A CP has been identified at the CAP in the zone to support the ECU's functioning.

The group also took the opportunity at this second meeting to review and update its action plan. During this review, it became apparent that for the moment, the committee has few resources available to it from within the Ministry and will largely be dependent on the contributions of partners for the rest of this school year. The summary table on the next page provides an overview of partners potentially interested in supporting Mali's one-classroom schools.

Table 4: Possibilities for supporting Mali's One-Classroom Schools

PARTNER	STATUS	MANDATE
PHARE	Confirmed	Teacher training, pedagogical materials development, in-class support, support to the instruction of reading and writing
EDP	Confirmed	Infrastructure support and/or assistance with modalities for hiring ECU teachers; also provisionally assisting with a potential study tour
Aide et Action	Confirmed	To assist with committee organization and dynamics; to incorporate units on local knowledge into the production of classroom materials
OMAES	Unconfirmed	May or may not support teacher training through grants from the Hewlett Foundation
Hewlett Foundation	Unconfirmed	Will read a further application from the committee or from OMAES; desirous of seeing problems identified in the external evaluation resolved.

In light of this information, the committee determined that several activities would be necessary in the near future to ensure that they could move forward with their action plan. These activities included:

- a) Identifying a new MEALN chairperson for the committee to ensure consistent leadership;
- b) Identifying potential sites for the creation of new one-classroom schools in the 10 CAPs where pedagogical counselors were trained during 2008-2009 on the techniques for managing a one-classroom school;
- c) Identifying potential teachers for employment in these one-classroom schools;
- d) Updating the training materials for use with teachers to assist them in managing instruction in their one-classroom school;
- e) Developing a comprehensive set of additional materials for teachers in the one-classroom schools to enable them to engage in a learner-centered approach with successful educational results.

As of this writing, a new chairperson has been identified and named by the DNEB, and the 10 CAPs (Kati, Fana, Segou, San, Mopti, Tenenkou, Douentza, Tombouctou, Gao, and Kidal) have been contacted and requested to suggest possible sites for single teacher schools in their areas. During the coming quarter, the PHARE program will organize a workshop for the revision and updating of the ECU teacher training modules, as well as for the development of useful classroom materials for potential new ECUs. The committee remains hopeful that training for new one-classroom schools can be accomplished during the 2nd quarter of 2009-2010.

III.B.3. Sub-Result 4.4: Public / Private Partnerships

During the quarter, PHARE staff developed a list of potential private sector partners for eventual contacts and discussions on investment in the education sector (See Appendix D). PHARE staff met with the Director of the Orange Foundation and her assistant. During the proposal stage, the Orange Foundation had indicated its interest in supporting some aspect of the program. In the intervening year, the leadership of the Foundation has changed, and PHARE essentially presented anew the program, its expected results, and possibilities for partnership. The Director asked that the project

submit a detailed proposal re. the activities for which PHARE would like support. This is currently being drafted.

III.C. Concerns / Comments

Working with medersas

PHARE has found that there is genuine openness among the medersas to receiving support from the PHARE program. However beyond that, the medersas are eager for much broader assistance than it is the PHARE mandate to provide. PHARE is limited to improving the teaching and learning of French literacy. However, actors in the medersas education sector would like assistance in improving Arabic or English language instruction, in securing textbooks and other instructional materials for a broad range of subjects, and in training of teachers in all subject areas. This is an opportunity that USAID may want to seriously consider seizing, as it may not always be there. There is evidence of increasing activities of extremist elements in Mali, and although the door is wide open now for US-financed interventions in medersas, that may not be the case a few years from now.

IV. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

IV.A. Expected activities

- Conduct internal audit of PHARE data
- Prepare reports on progress towards achieving the PHARE indicators in Year 1
- Finalize monitoring and evaluation procedures manual
- Develop observation tool to be used with for classroom teachers and IFM professors

IV.B. Actual Activities and Achievements

IV.B.1 Organizing the work of the monitoring and evaluation team

During this quarter, the team made important progress in organizing the work of the monitoring and evaluation team, including solidifying its procedures, verifying the quality of the available data and arranging for archiving. With the help of EDC staff member Norma Evans, the team carried out an internal audit of PHARE's year 1 data and prepared reports on each of PHARE's indicators. In addition, Ms. Evans led the development of a procedures manual for monitoring and evaluation that clearly describes how data relative to the program's indicators will be collected. The manual lays out clear instructions for the way in which training attendance and payment sheets are to be completed and routed, and for how evaluation sheets for judging training quality should be developed, used, and returned. The creation and completion of the manual afforded the team the opportunity to flesh out and update their work plan. Operating within this framework, the monitoring and evaluation team will be able to more easily track data on attendance at training events and provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of training activities. Both of these activities are key elements in following the agreed-upon performance monitoring plan and in designing future field interventions.

Another, related program monitoring and evaluation activity launched during this quarter was the establishment of the schools and teacher database for the monitoring and evaluation team. Mr. George Murnaghan assisted the PHARE program with this task, working to develop a listing of all the schools in the country that can be used for data entry relative to the indicators in the PHARE performance monitoring plan. It is expected that this database will be functional during the next quarter of the academic year.

As mentioned in the section on the IRI trainings above, the principal's monthly report to the DNEB was revised to include information on IRI listenership.

Finally, during the quarter, program staff worked on revising and completing the teacher observation tool in reading and writing that ranks teaching of reading and writing from novice to expert. This tool

will become the driving force in measuring teachers' progress, both under the PHARE monitoring and evaluation plan and under the longitudinal studies to be conducted by PHARE partner CAREF. PHARE looks forward to pilot testing and completion of the tool as well as training CPs and other staff in the use of the tool during the next quarter.

IV.B.1 Monitoring and data quality assessment mission of USAID

During this quarter the PHARE COTR conducted a monitoring and data quality assessment mission. The COTR conducted interviews with the PHARE team, reviewed independently the PHARE data, and carried out verifications in the Segou and Sikasso areas. Two of the concerns raised were the need for clearer guidelines and training at the school, district and regional levels regarding data transmission and storage and the importance of PHARE carrying out independent checks to verify the data. Both of these concerns are being addressed.

IV.C. Concerns / Comments

The PHARE Coordinator of Research and Monitoring and Evaluation position remains unfilled. As PHARE's request for posting an expatriate to the position was not approved, PHARE conducted, during this quarter, an open recruitment for the post, advertising the position for 3 weeks in two newspapers, coupled with radio announcements and an internet announcement on Malipages. To date, no candidate has been found with the necessary blend of qualifications. There were over thirty applicants, at least half of whom did not have the necessary technical skills. Of the remaining fifteen, nine took the practical test and six were interviewed. In the end, no candidate was found to be satisfactory. It is clear from our discussions with other USAID-funded education programs and NGOs that finding qualified senior level monitoring and evaluation staff in Mali is difficult. PHARE is planning to reopen the search.

V. Management and External Relations Issues

V.A. Relations with the Ministry

V.A.1 Ministry Technical Committee for PHARE

The Program's Technical Committee continued to meet regularly during this quarter (see copies of the minutes in Appendix E). At the October meeting, PHARE's annual workplan was reviewed and approved. In November, the results of the EGRA testing were presented, and at the December meeting, held in early January, the Committee reviewed PHARE's activities and achievements of 2009.

V.A.2 Proposed formal grants agreements with Academies and CAPs

During this quarter, USAID approved, in principle, the grants mechanism as a means of formalizing the program's relationship with the Academies and CAPs and facilitating the channeling of funds through them for teacher training, monitoring and evaluation and other technical activities.

The 2-day budgeting and planning sessions with the Academies and CAPs nationwide that began in September in each AE region were completed in October. As mentioned in the last quarterly report, these sessions included the participation of all CAP Directors from the region along with financial and planning staff and at least one pedagogical Counselor. The AE participants included the chief financial officer, the chief planner, and the heads of the training, basic education, and communications departments. A representative of the mayor's office in the city where the sessions were held was also invited, in light of the increased responsibilities of the communes for education.

The sessions provided an opportunity for PHARE to: a) present an overview of the kinds of interventions planned for the coming year, b) gain a first estimation of the number of people that would need to be involved in the IRI training sessions (both the trainers and the teachers and principals) and c) consult on logistical and financial issues relative to the delivery of the training.

These training sessions enabled the leadership of the regions and districts to acquire a much richer understanding of the PHARE program activities than would otherwise have been possible, and provided useful information for PHARE for budgeting and logistics provisions.

V.A.3 Participating in the conference on the current status of the reforms recommended by the national forum on education:

PHARE staff attended this conference organized in late November by the Prime Minister's Office to review steps taken thus far to respond to the recommendations from the National Forum on Education last year. Though not complete, progress has been made in a number of areas including restructuring the Ministry of Education, incorporating contractual teachers into civil service either at the national or communal levels and reforming the exam structure. Mention of the EGRA testing was included among the steps taken by the MEALN.

V.B. Communication activities

V.B.1 Organizing meetings and publicity events with various Malian authorities outside the education department

During this quarter's field visits, PHARE staff systematically met with governors and mayor's offices to share information about the program's activities in the different regions of Mali. PHARE feels this type of outreach is critical to developing a presence in the field and, eventually, to seeking broad-based support beyond the Ministry of Education for improvements in reading and writing instruction. In addition, PHARE staff drafted several articles for inclusion in the MEALN's different publications, including the newly-established magazine regularly circulated by the cabinet. PHARE staff and Ministry personnel were also interviewed about PHARE activities on the national radio and television prior to the launching of the IRI programs.

V.B.2 Presenting the PHARE program to the US Ambassador

In collaboration with the education team at USAID, the PRADDE-PC Program and Peace Corps, PHARE senior staff conducted a formal briefing on program activities for US Ambassador Milavonovich and the Deputy Chief of Mission, Peter Barlerin. PHARE staff explained, in condensed form, the challenges that exist in Malian classrooms in relation to reading and writing, the program's year 1 achievements (the standards frameworks, IRI and balanced literacy instruction), and activities re. the introduction of technology and improving French instruction in medersas. PHARE staff also informed the Ambassador about the MEALN's efforts to fund and launch a national educational radio station that would give the Ministry autonomy in broadcasting educational programs. The Ambassador expressed interest in this undertaking and asked pointed questions about progress to date.

V.C Management Issues

V.C.1 Recruitment

PHARE launched recruitments during this quarter for the position of monitoring and evaluation coordinator, as well as to fill open positions on the training team and the scriptwriting team⁸. In the initial interviews for the monitoring and evaluation position, no candidate fulfilling all the requirements of the position was identified. PHARE received applications for a grants manager, as recommended by the USAID auditors, and additional administrative support staff. Practical tests and interviews for the other positions will take place in the next quarter.

V.C.2 Performance Evaluations

PHARE staff conducted performance evaluations of all employees during the quarter. This process enabled all staff members to review their job descriptions and year 1 achievements with their respective supervisors, to identify areas for improvement and to establish goals for the coming year.

⁸ A member of the Training Team was appointed as Director of one of the District Education Offices (CAPs) and a member of the scriptwriting team took a job in the north in girls' education for another NGO.

Job descriptions for a number of positions were revised based on the review. The performance evaluations serve as the basis for annual salary increases.

V.C.3 Other Administrative Activities

During this period, PHARE also conducted an extensive review of its administrative and financial policies and procedures, revised and updated its procedures manual, and published calls for expressions of interest for the provision of goods and services, in order to pre-approve a certain number of vendors.

V.C.4 Program Audits

The USAID Inspector General's office in Dakar conducted a technical audit of USAID/Mali in October of 2009. As a USAID/Mali-funded program, PHARE's activities were of interest to the audit team. For a week in early October, PHARE staff provided translation services and information on program technical inputs to the auditors, traveling with them to the CAPs of Niena, Sikasso I, Segou, and Markala. For several weeks thereafter, PHARE staff also coordinated responses to audit questions with the team at USAID/Mali and with the EDC home offices. The auditors declared that they were impressed with the impact of PHARE's radio programming in the schools across Mali. Their primary recommendations to the PHARE program were to conduct a recruitment for a monitoring and evaluation team leader (the post has been vacant since the start of the program), and to initiate additional controls to ensure that: a) people targeted for training are the ones who attend, and b) people who attend trainings are those that receive per diem payments. As a result, the PHARE team, has put in place tighter controls of training activities.

Appendices

- Appendix A Training guide and other documents from pilot of multimedia modules
- Appendix B Training guide and other documents from Level 1 IRI Trainings
- Appendix C Training guide and other related documents from balanced literacy trainings
- Appendix D List of potential private sector partners
- Appendix E Minutes of Technical Committee Meetings

Acronyms

AE	Teaching Academy / Académie d'Enseignement
CAP	Pedagogical Support Center / Centre d'Animation Pédagogique
CL	Ciawaras Lisent / Read-Learn-Lead
CNE	National Education Center / Centre National de l'Education
DEN	Division of Teacher Education / Division de l'Enseignement Normale
DNEB	National Directorate of Basic Education / Direction Nationale de l'Education de Base
ECU	Single Classroom School / Ecole à classe unique
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ENSUP	Higher Institute of Teacher Education / Ecole Normale Supérieure
IEP	Institute for Popular Education / Institut de l'Education Populaire
IFM	Teacher Training College / Institut de Formation des Maîtres
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
MEALN	Ministry of Education / Ministère de l'Education, de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales
ORTM	Office of Malian Radio and Television / Office de la Radio / Télévision Malienne
PHARE	Programme Harmonisé d'Appui au Renforcement de l'Education
PISE	Education Sector Investment Program / Programme d'investissement sectoriel de l'éducation
VTC	Virtual Training Centre