



Ushirika wa Maendeleo ya Elimu Barani Afrika  
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# AFRICA LEARNING TOGETHER

**STRENGTHENING TEACHER  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN SENEGAL**

By Mor Dioum and Chinedu Anarado

## Summary

*In 2018, Senegal began implementing the second phase of the Programme to Improve Quality, Equity, and Transparency in the Education and Training Sector (PAQUET). PAQUET is a sector strategy covering the period 2018 – 2030 and aligned with SDG-4. One of its objectives is to improve the quality of classroom education in Senegal. In this edition of our Africa Learning Together (ALT) knowledge series, the Inspector of Elementary Education at the Ministry of National Education in Senegal, Mr. Mor Dioum, shares his perspective on efforts to build teacher capacity at the foundational learning (FL) level in the face of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the declining numbers of quality teachers, and what is needed to improve the quality of FL teaching to achieve PAQUET's sector goals.*

## Context

Senegal has recently experienced remarkable growth and development because of the country's efforts to become a middle-income economy by 2030. A critical component of this ambition is the development of a cadre of young Senegalese with the skills and competencies needed to drive economic growth. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Senegal has made progress in achieving universal basic education, including improving access to primary education from 58 percent in 2000 to 75 percent in 2020, while the number of students enrolled in pre-primary school has increased from 25,392 in 2000 to 256,367 in 2020.

With support from the World Bank and Agence France de Développement (AFD), Senegal is implementing a sectoral programme to achieve its education and training agenda. **The Education and Training Quality, Equity and Transparency Improvement Program (PAQUET-EF)**, known in French as **Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence – Education / Formation**, is a program spanning from 2018 to 2030 that aims to improve the quality, equity and transparency of education and training. The programme articulates three main objectives: equitable access to education, improving the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring quality education for all, and open, ethical, transparent, and inclusive governance of the education system. The programme's inclusive perspective ensures that addressing equity issues is a shared responsibility.

One of the three objectives of the PAQUET programme is to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning, with intermediate objectives focused on strengthening teacher skills, improving the teaching environment, and developing a strategy for using national languages in education. These objectives focus on preparing teachers, trainers, and educators with the professional skills required to develop and deliver quality and relevant courses, while also increasing the number of available teachers with the required skills, particularly at the basic education level.

## Teacher training and recruitment in Senegal

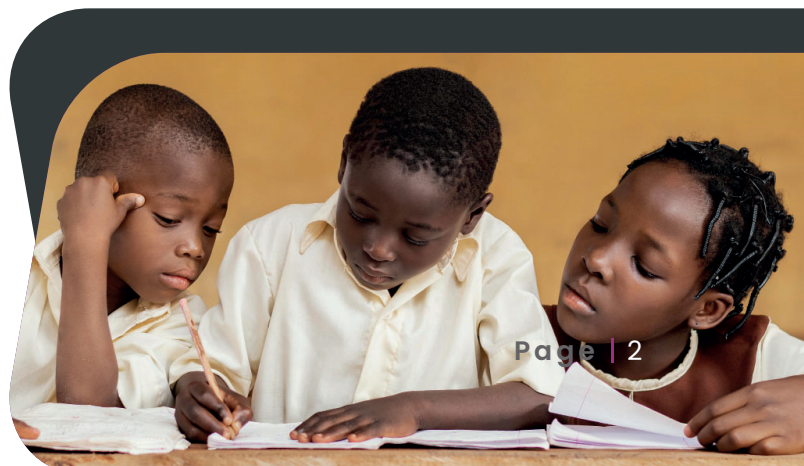
The Human Resources Department (HRD) of Senegal's Ministry of National Education is responsible for teacher recruitment. This process entails determining the number of teachers needed, administering a recruitment assessment developed by the Ministry's Competitive Examination Directorate, and subsequently assigning successful candidates to the Regional Education Personnel Training Centers (CRFPE) for a mandatory one-year (or nine-month, including breaks) teacher training program. After successful completion of their training, the HRD assigns the new teachers to schools.

But does the teacher training process end there? According to Mor Dioum, efforts to build teacher capacity continue even after they are assigned to schools. However, the Directorate of Continuing Education and the Directorate of Elementary Education, which provide pedagogical guidance on the areas in which capacity building is needed, take over the process at this stage. Various models are adopted to support PAQUET's ongoing teacher professional development programme, with a focus on literacy, numeracy, and science.

### Helping teachers teach literacy and numeracy at the elementary level

Mor Dioum shared some of the initiatives his department has put in place to strengthen the system of continuing professional development for teachers. These initiatives include support for the didactics of reading and mathematics, and dialectics for the introduction of science and technology. There are also solutions to help teachers build their capacity in the learning management cycle. Similarly, the management has created a peer review system involving a network of schools, where teachers meet with their peers in safe spaces to assess their capacities, learn from their colleagues in other schools, but also train themselves based on feedback from the ministry's pedagogical team. Remediation mechanisms are also available to support teachers who deal with students with learning difficulties in these subjects.

Mor Dioum mentioned that the system has benefited from external interventions, including the Project to Improve Elementary Mathematics Learning (PAAME) and the Reading Literacy for All (RLI) initiative. While PAAME focuses on the teaching and learning of mathematics, RLI develops learners' language and communication skills, including reading as a foundational activity. According to Mor, with this support, Senegalese teachers can deal with different learning scenarios and even manage large classes. Indeed, the training provided by the CRFPE includes modules on how to manage large groups.



## Supporting PAQUET's ambitions amid COVID-19

As in many other countries, the COVID-19 pandemic caused learning disruptions. However, Senegal managed to sustain learning activities during the outbreak. Recorded lessons were available on television and radio, including a partnership with Canal+ Éducation, a television station, to broadcast pre-recorded sessions of teachers delivering classes. Teachers were encouraged to support students in exam classes by taking advantage of distance learning measures. The government also provided physical learning resources to students in this category and extended the school year to recoup time lost due to school closures during the pandemic.

This approach yielded benefits with a notable improvement in performance following the results of the «Certificat de fin d'études élémentaires» exams. Mr. Dioum said the ministry is currently modifying the curriculum to include distance learning modules that have emerged because of the pandemic.

Senegal's post-COVID-19 response is a clear example of how the system is improving based on lessons learned from crisis response interventions. According to him, there are still digital resources available on the Ministry of National Education platforms that teachers and student teachers can access to support their personal development. These resources exist within the National Education Information and Management System (SIMEN). He believes that they should be formalized into online courses based on modules taught at the CRFPE. He recommends that countries develop resilience mechanisms to enable them to provide education in disrupted situations such as those caused by the pandemic.

### Teacher capacity Challenges in Senegal

Despite considerable progress, there are still challenges that need urgent attention. One of these is improving the supply of quality teachers in the learning system. Mor said Senegal faces severe shortage of teachers, a challenge it must overcome to make progress. To address this, the country recruits and trains a significant number of teachers each year and makes them available to the education system for deployment to schools.

Another issue is the attainment of equitable access to quality foundational learning, especially between urban and rural areas. In some ways, this is a situation caused by the shortage of qualified teachers in the system. Since equity is a key objective of the PAQUET programme, the country recently recruited about 5,000 teachers to address this problem. Although the newly appointed teachers have gone through the CRFPE route, they will need extensive professional development support to broaden their skills and reach the expected level of teaching for their category.

Additionally, there are concerns around the inadequacy of instructional materials to support literacy and numeracy instruction. According to Mor, it is one thing to have quality teachers, but they cannot be effective without the right learning materials and in sufficient quantity.

Mor proposed making it mandatory for all prospective teachers, regardless of category, to undergo training and testing at the CRFPE before being allowed to teach. He also proposed enhanced field supervision of teachers, including supportive supervision. He recommended that countries develop resilient teaching strategies to deal with disruptive situations such as those posed by the pandemic.

### What has worked well?

Mor noted significant progress in terms of performance by Senegalese learners, demonstrating that the Ministry's efforts in pre-service and in-service training are gaining ground and producing results. The results of the Elementary School Leaving Certificate illustrate some of the immediate benefits of Senegal's efforts to improve the quality of practicing teachers.



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*For our students to reach the required level, they need to learn better and to learn better, they need to be in contact with a well-trained teacher. Therefore, well-trained teachers are really the first guarantee of success for our learners here in Senegal.*

**Mr. Mor Dioum**

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