

University of Massachusetts Amherst
ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst

Center for International Education Faculty
Publications

Center for International Education

2005

Senegal case study

Bjorn Nordtveit

University of Massachusetts - Amherst, bjorn@educ.umass.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie_faculty_pubs

Recommended Citation

Nordtveit, Bjorn, "Senegal case study" (2005). *Center for International Education Faculty Publications*. 60.
Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie_faculty_pubs/60

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for International Education at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Center for International Education Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.



2006/ED/EFA/MRT/PI/71

Background paper prepared for the
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006
Literacy for Life

Senegal case study

Bjorn Harald Nordtveit
2005

This paper was commissioned by the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* as background information to assist in drafting the 2006 report. It has not been edited by the team. The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and should not be attributed to the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* or to UNESCO. The papers can be cited with the following reference: "Paper commissioned for the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006, Literacy for Life*". For further information, please contact efareport@unesco.org

Senegal case study

Bjorn Harald Nordtveit, PhD
bnordtveit@hotmail.com

Table of Contents

Acronyms	2
1. Understanding and measurement of literacy.....	3
2. Literacy implementation policies.....	6
3. The Women’s Literacy Program: a case study	8
4. Language and gender issues.....	16
Bibliography	19

Acronyms

- AGETIP (*Agence d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Publique*): Contract managing, or “outsourcing” agency in Senegal
- CIDA Canadian International Development Agency
- DAEB (*Direction de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education de Base*): Department for Literacy and Basic Education at the Ministry of Education
- DALN (*Direction de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales*): Department for Literacy and Local languages (formerly DAEB)
- EFA Education For All
- GTZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*) German Technical Cooperation for Development
- ICR Implementation Completion Report (the World Bank's project completion report)
- IDA International Development Association (it is the part of the World Bank that provide interest-free loans and some grants for to the world's poorest countries)
- IFC International Finance Corporation
- NGO Non-governmental Organization
- PM Procedures Manual
- PPP Public-private Partnership
- SAR (World Bank) Staff Appraisal Report (equivalent to a UN Project Document)
- SODEFITEX
Senegal's National Association for Development of Textiles
- UN United Nations
- UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
(www.unesco.org)
- WDR World Development Report (a yearly World Bank publication)
- WLP Women's Literacy Project (World-Bank financed literacy project in Senegal)
- WID Women in Development

1. Understanding and measurement of literacy

The Senegalese Ministry of Education's Department of Literacy and National Languages (DAELN, formerly DAEB) coordinates the intervention of various agencies and associations that are implementing literacy courses in Senegal.

Although these different actors have different types of programs, literacy is broadly understood for most of them as the ability to read and write a simple text.

Notwithstanding a common and often functionalist conception of literacy, different institutions have very different approaches to literacy provision, and the instruments used to evaluate literacy vary greatly among them.

For the measurement of literacy skills, the approach used in Senegal depends on the goal of the exercise. Three main approaches have been used: (a) in some studies, it is considered that a person who has finished a certain level of schooling as literate (e.g., a person who has attended primary school is "automatically" considered as literate); (b) a person is sometimes considered as literate if this person declares him or herself literate (self-assessment); and (c) a person may be considered as literate after succeeding in a test to control his or her ability to read and write. The first two models are frequently used to estimate national literacy rates during large-scale surveys. On a project or program level, many institutions employ method (c) for testing literacy skills. The Department of Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB), for example, uses a written test to evaluate the learners' literacy level at the end of a literacy course. Frequently, the evaluators use writing skills as a proxy for literacy: "the learners who have satisfied the required level of writing skills are considered to have acquired the required reading skills" (DAEB, 2001, p. 10). The required writing skills for the learners consist of his or her ability to freely express their ideas, opinions, and feelings about a subject linked to their daily life. Those who have not acquired a sufficient level in writing are asked to read a simple text decided by the evaluators. In practice, many evaluators consider people literate even if they are barely able to write their own name, because they do not wish to "discourage" beginners and neo-literate learners (Nordtveit, 2004, 2005).

Whereas government institutions mostly use a narrow definition of literacy, the idea of considering literacy within a greater context of “literate environment” is gaining ground. For example, Tostan, an NGO that has been involved in literacy education in Senegal since 1982, considers that “traditional literacy learning for previously unschooled rural women can be meaningless if it is not presented with other essential information. For women who struggle with basic daily needs, a comprehensive ‘life skills’ learning approach makes sessions appropriate to their needs immediately” (www.tostan.org). Tostan launched a comprehensive effort for literacy learning, which included basic skills learning and human rights education, and which made pedagogical use of African traditions, including dance, poetry, theater, and song in the learning sessions.¹ Tostan’s broader understanding of literacy has been gradually adopted by most of the major non-formal education programs in Senegal. The overreaching goals of literacy programs are at present intimately connected to poverty reduction strategies, and literacy is seen as an important element in the struggle against poverty.

Most often, literacy education in Senegal is understood as a part of the non-formal education (NFE) structure of the country. The principal two NFE interventions consist of adult literacy courses which are designed for adults in the 15-40 years age bracket,² and basic non-formal education for unschooled children and out-of-school youth, aiming at providing an equivalence of primary schooling through a catch-up program. Non-formal education can be characterized as “any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups of the population, adults as well as children” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). In Senegal, more precisely, the objective of non-formal education projects was to provide an alternative education path for

¹ UNESCO has rewarded Tostan’s NFE initiatives for being an international example of innovative programs and best practice: see further information in UNESCO: *Education for All: Making It Work Innovation Series*.

² The government prioritized youths and adults in the 9 – 40 years age groups for literacy programs. Two types of programs were offered; one three-year literacy program (ECB: *Ecole de Base Non-formelle*) for out-of school and unschooled adolescents, and 12-18 months’ literacy courses for young adults and adults. People above the age of 40 were also permitted to attend classes. The mean age for literacy classes was about 21. (Nordtveit, 2004).

illiterate people, whether adults or adolescents, who had fallen outside the formal education system in the country.

The literacy education was provided in local languages, a convention adopted publicly by the government since its first literacy policy was established in 1971 (Kane, 2000). Tostan and most other literacy providers (including the state) exclusively offered non-formal education courses in local languages (whereas the official and primary school language remained the French). The projects were not designed for making people literate only in a vacuum, but for provision of a set of skills that give the learners tools to perform their daily tasks more efficiently. Most programs therefore provided a learning package that at least included lessons about health and hygiene, and often offered other basic skills learning and income-generating activities as well. Tostan was among the most innovative of the programs in this regard, and provided a comprehensive package of skills education, including human rights and democracy education: “Beginning with themes of human rights and democracy, participants gain their voices and self-confidence, forming a better understanding of their important role in their family, community and society” (www.tostan.org). Other programs, financed by the state, rarely offered this type of human rights instruction, but focused on basic knowledge expected to have an impact on health-related, economic and educational indicators in the country (Gueye, 1999).

For the larger government-run programs, the efforts concentrated on a quantitative expansion of literacy, rather than on the quality of the programs. A comprehensive 10-year effort to improve the literacy rate in the country was launched in 1993, and enrolled over one million people in literacy programs over a ten-year period (DAEB, 2003). To implement this literacy campaign, the state used a public-private partnership approach to finance NGOs and small local associations to set up local literacy activities. International organizations, such as CIDA, GTZ, and the World Bank supported the government financially. The projects defined the purpose of literacy as “to provide a range of important information of interest to beneficiaries, and develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, at times with the goal of making participants leaders in the communities or for women’s empowerment” (World Bank/SAR, Annex 2, p. 1). In the World Bank-financed Women’s Literacy project (1996 – 2001), literacy was understood as a means “to provide participants

with a usable level of reading, writing and math skills, teach a range of important information, cultivate critical thinking and problem solving skills, and bring participants to a level where they can retain their skill and improve it over time” (World Bank/SAR, Annex 2, p. 1). The literacy projects were supposed to adapt the learning to the participants’ needs. However the format of the curriculum was fairly rigid and based on a primary school model (albeit using local languages). Very few providers used methods for adult learning, for example, participative learning methods such as group work, peer tuition, etc. which are frequently recommended for adult learning (Abadzi, 2003).

2. Literacy implementation policies

In Senegal, in the beginning of the 20th Century, different missionary associations and colonial institutions tried to improve the literacy rates in the country through the set up of literacy classes. These classes were conducted both in local languages (especially Wolof) and in French. Most programs, however, were limited in scale and did not have a great impact. After its independence (1960), Senegal had a very low literacy rate estimated at 34% (Camara & Sow, 2003). In 1968, the existence of local languages was recognized, and their use was authorized officially. Local languages became the language of choice for most adult literacy programs (Prinz, 1996). A first literacy policy was set up in 1971, when the Senegalese government tried to re-orient the education sector and to move the country from a colonial education model towards a genuine national system. The government gave the Department for Vocational Training at the Secretariat for Youth and Sports the responsibility for literacy (Prinz, 1996; Kane, 2000). However, the department lacked resources to implement any long-term literacy strategy. A new reform in 1981 was designed to improve school enrollment and achievement. In 1986 the Department for Literacy and Basic Education (DAEB) was created, with an aim to establish strategies to eliminate illiteracy, to train literacy teachers, to control and coordinate literacy actions in Senegal, to promote local languages, and to provide the necessary basic skills education for the population to participate in the development process of the country (Prinz, 1996). In spite of this policy effort, the Government lacked funding to

implement any coherent and large-scale literacy campaign. Most literacy programs in the 1970s-1990 were financed and set up by international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and associations. The scale of these interventions was limited, and they had little impact on the overall illiteracy rate (Diouf, 2001).

In 1988, a census found that 69% of the Senegalese population was illiterate (i.e., the literacy rate was 31%, which was lower than estimates from the 1960s). The census findings, together with international focus on basic education and EFA (e.g., through the Jomtien conference in 1990) made the state realize that illiteracy was a problem.

In the 1990s a new implementation strategy was tested out, based on public-private partnerships through outsourcing, or *faire-faire*. The Government decided to use civil society associations to deliver services. During a colloquium in Kolda, organized in October 1993 by a newly appointed delegated Minister of Literacy, a 10-year strategy to improve literacy rates nation-wide was defined. The policy had a clear quantitative mandate, insomuch as it intended to reduce the illiteracy rate by 5% per year. The facets of the policy were as follows:

- Reduce illiteracy, especially among women in the 9-39 years age group;
- Reduce disparities between regions and between urban and rural areas;
- Improve quality through implementation of functional literacy courses in local languages;
- Promote a literate environment in local languages;
- Use public-private partnerships to implement the literacy courses;
- Coordinate donors' actions towards this goal (Gueye, 1999).

The non-formal education sector in Senegal did not have any specific policy before the colloquium in Kolda. Before Kolda, literacy programs were implemented by NGOs and other organizations and enterprises, e.g., the National Association for Development of Textiles (SODEFITEX). The sector did not receive much attention from the state's side before the 1990s, when the *faire-faire* (public-private partnerships) strategy was defined. The new policy was introduced by the

government, and inspired by the existing civil society activity in the field. Also, it was consistent with expressed donor interests and international trends in service delivery (see paper on PPPs). The interest from the state's side led to more state funding and a higher donor interest in sector. Research has found some improvement in the sector from the mid-1990s, due to better financing of the NGO initiatives, through use of *faire-faire* (Nordtveit, 2005). The financing enabled the providers to purchase better learning materials, and to set up more classes. The government focused on a quantitative expansion of the sector, not on qualitative improvements, so the main changes in the 1990s were related to the increasing quantity of classes offered.

Better access to primary education has improved the literacy rate, and currently, about half of the Senegalese population has attended school, and is considered as literate (Senegalese Government, 2003 at <http://www.gouv.sn/>). The World Bank estimates the illiteracy rate at 61% (in 2002) as compared to 39% in Sub-Saharan Africa, or 38% in low-income countries (World Bank education statistics, at <http://www1.worldbank.org/education/edstats/>). The literacy rate in Senegal, according to these numbers, is still among the lowest in the world. There is a significant gender gap in school enrollment and attainment.

A new literacy conference took place in Thies in 2003. It was declared that the former 10-year policy had been a success, since it had made possible the enrollment of more than one million people in literacy courses over the prior ten years. A new national policy was set up for the period of 2004-2015, still based on using public-private partnerships. The new policy was largely based on prior methods and strategies, but also had the intention to improve quality in the next 10-years phase.

3. The Women's Literacy Program: a case study

The Women's Literacy Program (WLP) was a result of the policy initiatives in Kolda in 1993. Its purpose was to correct the large disparities between female and male literacy in the country through provision of literacy courses to women. This was done through the use of a public-private partnership implementation method, in which provider associations (mainly civil society associations such as NGOs, religious, and

for-profit associations) were subcontracted to implement literacy classes. The processes of the subcontracting entailed that the government, through an independent selection procedure, chose the best literacy project proposals submitted by civil society associations each year, and financed them. The contracts between the government (using a parastatal contract-management agency, the AGETIP, as intermediary) indicated that the providers should be paid to do the following work: (i) recruit, pay, and train staff, including literacy teachers; (ii) procure all necessary equipment for literacy training; (iii) monitor and evaluate the literacy courses in the concerned communities; and (iv) provide regular feedback about progress report to the government and AGETIP. The providers were therefore quite autonomous in their literacy implementation, and in most cases the government's intervention was reduced to irregular and infrequent monitoring visits to the project sites.

The program was implemented between 1996 and 2001, and its objective was to enroll 135, 000 people in literacy classes, of which at least 75% were to be women. The quantitative enrollment goals of the project were achieved, and even surpassed, according to government statistics. In the program evaluation report, it was estimated that about 200,000 people (87% women) enrolled in literacy training in the local languages of Wolof, Pulaar, Sereer, Joola, Mandinka, and Sonike (ICR, 2004).³ Civil society's capacity to enroll a higher volume of people in literacy courses than expected was considered as a sign of effectiveness of the outsourcing approach used.⁴

The program also published many literacy booklets in local languages and supported five quarterly newspapers (one in each region covered by the project), which were publicized in local languages. The program continues to this day, but is financed through the education sector program in Senegal (supported by the World Bank).

The Women's Literacy Program is interesting to use as a case study, for the following reasons:

³ See table 3 for results of the program: A longitudinal study conducted in 1999-2003 found that the success rates for literacy acquisition was relatively meager (26-35% of the non drop-outs learned to read and write), but that functional skills learning was rather good (68% success). Nordtveit (2005) estimates an overall success rate of the program (including drop-out and non-success) at about 25%.

⁴ Nordtveit (2005) reckons that one of the main reasons for the quantitative improvements in the sector was due to the strong donor support to the faire-faire approach.

- It was one of the first government-supported literacy programs in Sub-Saharan Africa that used public-private partnerships to implement literacy services;
- It had apparently a great quantitative impact;
- It was used as a model for other countries, such as Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, and Ivory Coast,
- Several tracker studies have followed the project, and the Department of Literacy and Basic Education has acquired a quite substantial information base on the project.

The WLP financed 312 literacy projects over a 5-year period, out of 960 requests. In average, there were 600 learners per project. Each project was implemented by one provider association, which set up about twenty literacy classes (each class was supposed to have 30 learners). The training lasted for 450 hours, most often during the dry season when rural learners were less busy with agriculture-related occupations. The courses lasted between 10 and 18 months, depending on a pre-defined agreement between the learners and the provider.

The curricula of the literacy courses were gradually improved upon. The providers had a large autonomy in setting up the classes, but had to use a basic template given by the WLP. At first, the providers offered functional literacy training focusing on literacy (i.e., to learn to write, read, and perform basic mathematical operations) as well as some basic skills, especially related to hygiene and health. The learners could choose the language of instruction and timetable for the classes. Also, some providers obtained financing for post-literacy training, which was offered to a reduced number of learners that completed the literacy course. The purpose of the post-literacy activities was to offer basic skills and income-generating training that helped the participants to sustain the literacy skills they had learned in the literacy course. In total, only 13,133 learners (or about 8% of the persons who attended literacy courses) attended post literacy courses (World Bank, ICR, 2001). The popular demand for post-literacy courses, however, was far higher than the offer. Responding to the demand, the government and providers devised a new type of literacy course, which integrated literacy and post literacy activities. This approach was called “the integrated approach” and was implemented from 1999 and until present. The

integrated approach used the same public-private partnership methods as the former literacy courses. The provider associations, however, received a higher financing per enrollee than in the former approach, and had supplementary duties. These new duties included the following:

- Organization of income-generation activities, such as soap-making, dyeing, poultry, shop keeping, or other activities, as decided by the provider in consultation with the learners;
- Management training to selected leaders of the local women's association;
- Training of two community members to become *relais*, or a substitute literacy teachers who would take over the community's learning activities when the provider's intervention finished;
- Construction and equipment of a permanent community learning center in each of the implementation areas – and set-up of a small community library in the center;
- Coordination of development activities with local authorities.

This integrated approach proved to be very popular with the learners. The dropout rate of the projects was seemingly low, and was estimated at 15% (World Bank. ICR, 2004).⁵

The courses were not free; each participant had to pay about \$4 to the provider to participate.⁶ The participants were from both urban and rural areas in Senegal, and belonged to different socio-cultural, ethnic, and religious background. Most participants, however, belonged to the poorer segment of the Senegalese population. There is some evidence that the poorest of the poor could not afford to participate because of the opportunity costs and the \$4 required direct fees (Nordtveit, 2005).

⁵ Some estimates set the drop-out rate higher, e.g., Nordtveit (2005) estimates it at 34%.

⁶ The participants' contribution was encouraged by the Government as a way to ensure the participants' seriousness of attending courses. In some cases, when the participants could not pay in cash, they paid in-kind, and in some cases the local women's association paid for the poorest of the participants (Nordtveit, 2004, 2005).

Despite the popularity of the courses, evaluation reports from the WLP indicated that the literacy achievements of the learners were low. Also, some providers were more interested in obtaining funds than in providing high-quality literacy courses. In this regard, the public-private outsourcing approach was heavily criticized by many educators. The approach was said to have “some side effects with devastating consequences on various literacy programmes in Senegal. As a matter of fact, the ‘faire-faire’ [public-private partnerships] has sharpened people’s appetite in such way that there is now a new race of literacy entrepreneurs whose main aim is only to be eligible in the organization of literacy classes in order to be funded by on-going bi-lateral or multilateral literacy projects” (Kane, 2000, p. 160). Because of the lacking quality of many courses, the outcome in terms of literacy acquirement was low. Evaluations showed that “the outcome of literacy programs are still modest” and that “reading must become automatic, fast, effortless and accurate in order to be useful” (Abadzi, 2003, p. 1). The reading skills obtained through the WLP were rarely fluent, and in some cases the *only* skills acquired were on how to use the telephone, and in a best case scenario, the ability to write small notes, and/or keep a small business journal (Nordtveit, 2005).

A tracer study of some 1800 learners divided the reading achievements of the WLP into three categories:

Level 1: The learner can read an easy text that is related to his or her daily occupations;

Level 2: The learner can decipher words;

Level 3: The learner cannot read a word or a letter;

At start of the literacy class, 74% of the participants were considered illiterate and only 17% were considered literate. Two years after the start of the program, the same learners were evaluated. In all, 66% of the learners were now able to read fluently or at least to decipher words; the remaining 34% still could not read a word (or a letter) at the end of the course (see table 1).

Table 1: Reading achievements of the WLP

	Level 1: Literate	Level 2 Intermediate	Level 3 Illiterate
Literacy level at enrollment	17%	7%	74%
6 months after start of program	36%	16%	48%
24 months after start of program	52%	14%	34%

(Source: DAEB – *Etude Longitudinale*)

The results of the courses varied a great deal between providers. Different studies showed that many learners who were really interested in learning compensated for low-quality instruction by attending several literacy courses. An impact study of 1500 people showed that as many as 53% of the enrollees (in 2003) had been to previous literacy classes, 36% had been to Arabic classes, and 23% had been to formal primary schooling. Only about 30% of the learners attended literacy instruction for the first time. The literacy level of the participants who had been to prior schooling institutions, however, was very low. A local-language reading test submitted to the learners showed that most enrollees that had been to former schooling institutions were not fluent readers, but were able to decipher words (see table 2).

Table 2: Literacy rates for people having attended school or other literacy courses at enrollment of literacy course

	Literate	Intermediate	Illiterate
Participants having been to primary school (average attendance: 5 years)	10%	81%	9%
Participants having been to Arabic school (average attendance: 3 years)	3%	70%	27%
Participants having been to a previous literacy class (1-2 years)	3%	70%	27%

(Source: DAEB, *Etude d'Impact, Draft 2004 Version*)

Some of the lack of quality in literacy education may have been related to the use of public-private partnerships. Most providers, for example, cut costs on the literacy teachers' training. Also, many providers did not create an adequate learning center, so the center fell into ruins soon after the project had ended. The relais did not have any incentives to repair the center or continue literacy activities (Nordtveit, 2005). The best opinion, from the villagers' point of view, was to sustain literacy and development activities by obtaining financing from another project.

The writing achievements were lower than the reading achievements, and the score on math and problem-solving was even lower than the results of writing tests (see table 3 below). Different evaluations from the project show that the results of lessons on income-generating activities, such as soap-making, shop keeping, chicken-raising, etc., were generally better than lessons on literacy. The skills and income-generating activities were adapted to the local demands, and were met with enthusiasm from the learners.

Table 3: Success rates of PAF (integrated course, cohort of 1999)

	Literate at enrollment	Literate after completion	Success
Reading	17%	52%	35%
Writing	13%	39%	26%
Problem-solving	3%	23%	20%
IGA skills	5%	73%	68%
Average	10%	47%	37%

(Source: DAEB – *Etude Longitudinale*)

The longitudinal study found that only 5% of the enrollees had prior knowledge of the income-generating skills taught in the project, and at the end evaluation, 73% of the learners had gained knowledge of these skills. This corresponds to a very satisfactory success rate of about 68%, much higher than the success rates for reading writing, and math skills, which were 35%, 26%, and 20% respectively (see table 3 above).

The high success of the income-generating activities indicates that the learners appropriated and adapted the literacy project to their own needs, which are more

linked to concerns about daily income than about literacy knowledge per se. The weaknesses of the project are related to the relatively low outcome in terms of literacy skills and the need to for the participants to attend several literacy projects in order to attain a minimum level of fluency in reading and writing. Also, the literacy activities (setting up of a learning and activities center, training of a *relais*, set-up of a community library, and thus the creation of a literate environment) seemed to be less sustainable than income-generating activities. In many cases, the library books were distributed among learners or forgotten somewhere, the *relais* did not have any incentives to continue teaching and therefore soon stopped providing lessons, and the center itself was soon reorganized for some other use (e.g., store for food), or it simply fell apart. The public-private partnership method may have been an obstacle to implement high-quality literacy classes. However, whereas the partnership approach seems to be problematical for implementing literacy, it also seems appropriate for implementing income-generating activities. The Senegalese government is now exploring the possibilities of a more mixed approach, in which the government intervenes to compensate for market failure, e.g., in the training of literacy teachers. The question of sustainability can be addressed at several levels: At the community level, the PAPF recognized that learning activities in the village need to be sustainable. This is why the project (i) financed a permanent learning and activities' center in the village; (ii) trained *relais* persons to continue learning activities after the project ended; and (iii) helped to set up a community library. The *relais* persons were not paid, however, and in many cases the learning center and community library were left unattended because of lack of local ownership. It is suggested that the lack of sustainability of many local actions was due to the fact that the courses was provider-driven and not owned by the local communities (Nordtveit, 2005).

The civil society associations created as a result of PAPF, and the literacy initiatives of these associations, are in many cases not sustainable, since they were created as a response to funding by external donors. It can be debated, however, the extent to which such funding needs to be sustainable, since illiteracy in itself is supposed to be declining when a country moves toward EFA.

4. Language and gender issues

In Senegal, literacy classes were taught in local languages. The official language, used by the administration and taught in formal schools, is French. However, the adult literacy classes did not aim to create the capacity for the learners to obtain a government job or to return to formal schooling. Literacy was not seen as an objective in itself, but as a means for improvement of the learners' daily lives. Its purpose was to make learners performing better in society (e.g., to be more skillful in market exchanges), and to give them some learning and communication tools. Since it was easier for the participants to learn in local languages, these latter became the natural choice for literacy projects. Hence, the literacy policy, since 1971, focused on the development of six local languages: Wolof, Pular, Sereer, Jola, Mandinka, and Soninké (Gueye, 1999). An impact study showed that most classes were taught in Wolof (DAEB, 2004).

Table 4: Ethnic belonging of learners

Ethnic group	Ethnic division of population in Senegal	Percentage of learners
Wolof	44%	51%
Pulaar	23%	28%
Serrer	15%	12%
Mandinka	5%	7%
Soninke	2%	3%
Other	11%	0%

Source: *Impact Study*, DAEB, 2004

The number of learners in Jola and some other minority languages was almost nil (see Table 4). The languages of Wolof, Pulaar and Serrer represented 91% of the learners. Many participants indicated that although they were not of the Wolof ethnic group, they wanted to learn to read and write in Wolof language, since it was the most common language in the country, and its knowledge would greatly improve their communication skills (Nordtveit, 2005).

Most literacy projects in Senegal are targeted at women, and rapidly, “literacy in Senegal is becoming a female business” (Kane, 2000, p.160). About 80% of the enrollees are women. The focus on women is due to two factors: (i) to correct gender disparities; and (ii) because it is considered that investment in women’s literacy will help family literacy and also improve the families’ health, hygiene, and income. The courses thus focus on what women can do for the family and the community, rather than focusing on how literacy skills can improve women’s situation in society. The philosophy of most courses emphasizes women’s role as a means to support the family and local economic growth, and thus firmly establishes the philosophy of literacy courses within a women in development (WID) perspective. One exception was Tostan, which saw as one of its core mandates to teach women about their rights: “The session on the right to be free from discrimination, for example, provides a reference point from which participants begin discussing pending issues across many levels of their communities. In May, 2001, Senegalese women in the region of Tambacounda used this human right to justify a public march protesting the beating of one of their classmates by her husband” (www.tostan.org).

The literacy courses supported by the government through public-private partnerships (such as the WLP) had an effect on women’s empowerment through training of local women in leadership and management. In particular, each literacy course was supposed to set up a course management committee. The subsequent training (by the provider) of this management committee often encouraged the women to organize the class as a for-profit association. This for-profit association would continue the collective income-generating activities that had been learned during the course, but would also in certain cases become literacy providers. Additionally, in the WLP specific training helped the *relais* (who were almost always women) to improve their knowledge and administration skills. Such training often led to the subsequent recruitment of the *relais* as a literacy teacher in a next cohort of subprojects (Nordtveit, 2005).

International research has shown that literate mothers are more likely than illiterate mothers to send their girls to primary school. This was recognized in Senegal, and most programs for adults intended to boost girl’s primary school involvement. Hence, the project document for WLP states that “the program is estimated to result in a 23%

increase in girl's [primary school] enrollment” (SAR, 1996, p. 5); and “all other things being equal (income, geographic location, ethnicity, etc.), literate mothers are about 50% more likely to send their daughters to school than illiterate mothers” (SAR, 1996, p. 10). Unfortunately, there is little research in Senegal that can prove or refute these numbers. The probability that mothers having been to literacy courses send their girls to primary school can be supported by the fact that most literacy courses were promoting girls’ education, i.e., they raised the participants’ awareness of the importance of sending girls to school. Also, the literacy classes were often taught in a reading and activities center that included reading materials for children, and thus advanced children’s interest for schooling.

Bibliography

Abadzi, H. (2003). *Improving adult literacy outcomes: lessons from cognitive research for developing countries*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Camara & Sow (2003). *Coût et financement de l'Alphabétisation au Sénégal*.

Coombs, P. H., et Ahmed, M. (1974). *Attacking rural poverty; how nonformal education can help*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

DAEB. (2001). *Rapport d'Evaluation des Sous Projets de Post Alphabétisation*. PAPP – DAEB.

DAEB/PAPP. (non dated). *Rapport de Synthèse de l'Evaluation*

DAEB, *Longitudinal study*, 3 reports: LS-T0 (2001), LS-T1 (2002), and LS-T1.2 (2003) .

DAEB. (2004). *Etude d'Impact* (draft report).

Diouf, A.M., & Nachtman, Y. (2001). *L'Education Non Formelle Au Sénégal: Description, Evaluation et Perspectives*. Paris : UNESCO Editions.

Gueye, P. M. "Reflections on the Advantages and the Practical Use of National Languages in Adult Literacy in Senegal." *In* Kuper & Veliente-Catter. 1999. *Educación de los adultos en África y Latinoamérica. Experiencias interculturales en un encuentro multicultural*. GTZ.

Kane, L. "The state of Adult and Continuing Education in Senegal" in Indabawa, S., Oudaran, A., Afrik, T., Walters, S. (2000). *The state of Adult and Continuing Education in Africa*. IIZ/DVV and The University of Namibia.

MOE/DAEB/PAPP. (2000). *Manuel de Procédures pour l'Expérimentation des Programmes Intégrés d'Education des Adultes, 2000-2002*. Dakar : Groupe SIFNI.

Nordtveit, B. H. (2004). *Managing Public-private Partnerships: Lessons from Literacy Education in Senegal* (2004). Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series – No. 72. Washington DC: World Bank.

Nordtveit, B. H. (2005). *The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Developing Countries: A Case Study of Public-Private Partnerships in Senegal*. Dissertation, University of Maryland. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1903/2193>

Printz, M. (1996). *L'Alphabétisation au Sénégal*. L'Harmattan.

Senegalese Government (2003). Statistics - see: <http://www.gouv.sn/>

Tostan. (2005) *Education about African Women's Health and Human Rights*. On website: www.tostan.org

World Bank education statistics; see: <http://www1.worldbank.org/education/edstats/>

World Bank. (1996). *Staff Appraisal Report. Report No. 15517-SE*. World Bank, Washington DC.

World Bank. (2003). *Making Services Work for Poor People*. World Development Report, 2004. World Bank/Oxford University Press.

World Bank. (2004). *Implementation Completion Report (ICR)*. Report No. 27339 SE. World Bank, Washington DC.