News from Bonsaaso Site, Mbola Site

Training Sessions For Grade 3 and 4 Teachers In Bonsaaso site

On October 30 and 31, the Education Team in Bonsaaso held training sessions for certain grade 3 and 4 teachers in the cluster. These sessions were part of a literacy assessment study currently being conducted in Bonsaaso.

As part of the study, half of the participating teachers were randomly selected to receive training in a phonics-based remedial intervention for teaching reading. The training sessions were led by the Bonsaaso Education Coordinator, Charles Akomaning-Mensah, Cecilia Ama Serwah of MVP and Ghana Education Service (GES), and Francis Eghan of GES. Five teachers, accompanied by their head teachers, attended the training.

The sessions included an overview of phonics as well as methodology for using phonics in the classroom. Teachers worked collaboratively and independently to plan lessons based on the resource pack and guide used in the session. Overall, the teachers were enthusiastic participants and excited to use what they learned in their classes!

MVP Education Coordinators Retreat – West and Central Africa
By Alia Karim, Education Specialist

On November 7-8th 2013, the MDG Center in Dakar hosted an education retreat for team leaders and education coordinators for WCA sites including teams from Pampaida, Bonsasso, Tiby, Potou, SADA, Benin and Chad. Many group discussions conducted on topics such as strategies for targeted age appropriate enrollment, data collection and sharing, roles and responsibilities of CEWs, operations and management, learning assessments, teacher professional development, WASH, and Connect to Learn. The site education coordinators spent time with their respective team leaders working on revising last year’s ’3 Year Plan’ into a ‘2 Year Plan’ for 2014-2015 to inform the planning and budgeting process for the upcoming year. The retreat also included special guests such as Dr. Amadou Niang (MDG West Center Director) and representatives from the Academic Inspectorate in Louga and IDEN.

Interesting site-specific activities shared included:
Professionalization of CEWs through formal teaching certification in Pampaida; Piloting of targeted remediation based on learning assessment results, through training of teachers on basic phonics principles and activities in Bonsasso; Stakeholder engagement in Potou Establishment of a teacher training expert group in SADA; Training of School Management Committees to conduct sensitization activities by participation in an adult literacy course.
Improving Quality Education Through Teacher Training: Case of Mbola MVP
By Alia Karim, Education Specialist

In 2012 and 2013 MVP Mbola sent a selected group of teachers to attend a teacher training workshop entitled “Teaching in Action” (TIA) in Moshi, Tanzania, hosted by Mwenge University College of Education (MWUCE) which focuses on learner centered methodology in the classroom. In October 2013, a brief study was undertaken at the site to follow up with the teachers who had attended TIA over the past two years. A member of the education team also met with representatives from the TIA program and the principal of MWUCE to discuss the history, methodology, and intent behind the TIA program.

The primary purpose of the site visit was to observe teachers in their classrooms, and interview teachers and head teachers to understand how the techniques from TIA were implemented in the classroom, and what additional need there was for in-service training for primary school teachers. In some schools, teachers who attended TIA trained other teachers in the basic techniques and methodologies they learned at the school level. Therefore, the study also included observations and interviews with the teachers who benefitted from this “school based training” (SBT).

Based on the interviews with teachers and head teachers, the main sentiment was that the new methods learned in the TIA and SBT trainings have helped them:

• Steer away from the lecture methods previously employed
• Assess and understand the skills of individual learners better, check for understanding

• Engage students in the classroom more
• Provide students with specific praise and rewards for mastery of skills
• Using locally available materials to create learning materials for class, this keeps students interested
• Help students work in groups and interact with each other as well as the teacher

All the teachers and head teachers interviewed commented that they would like a training like TIA to be conducted at the local level, so as to include more teachers. Outstanding concerns raised during interviews and observations included:

• The primary school curriculum being very ambitious and covering many subjects
• Learner centered methods taking more time to implement in the classroom, detracting from the ambitious curriculum required they cover
• Frequent student truancy
• Lack of support and involvement from parents in their children’s education
• Lack of basic materials and facilities in the schools

The MVP Mbola team is working closely with Regional Education Advisor and NY based Education team to outline next steps for conducting this type of training, specifically aimed towards primary school teachers within the MV1 cluster in Mbola, on a wider scale. Other partners and stakeholders such as the district academic office, ward education coordinators, local teacher training college, head teachers, and consultants from the TIA program will also be included in this important initiative.
Impact of SSA/P ("Gateway" Accelerated Education Strategy)

With the goal of giving out-of-school children aged 9-12 the chance to complete primary school, the Tiby Millennium Village site, in partnership with the Stromme Foundation and the NGO APSM (Protestant Association for Health in Mali), started the Gateway Accelerated Education Strategy.

The selected students took intensive courses integrating learning in local languages, followed by learning in French, during a period of 9 months. At the end of this period, students took a test that allowed them to enter formal school at 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade. For this first entry, we were particularly interested in two Gateway students from Dioro Tintin who are in 5th and 6th grade at Dioro School 4. Having completed Gateway at Dioro Tintin, these two students have been among the best in their class since last year. They were interviewed by the Regional Education Counselor from the MDG Center – West and the Education Coordinator at the Tiby Millennium Village site.

Student Abdoulaye Sékou Diallo

My name is Abdoulaye Sékou Diallo. I’m 12 years old and in 6th grade at Dioro School 4. I am proud to be the best in my class since last year. Before Gateway, I went only to Koranic school until I was 9. When I turned 10 I enrolled at Gateway at Dioro Tintin. At the end of the 9 months of the program, I entered Dioro 4 in 5th grade, where I am still the first in my class. I want to become a Minister. I have two brothers and a sister who didn’t have the opportunity to go to school like me. My father is dead and my mother takes care of us with the money she earns by selling milk.

Student Abdoulaye Sékou DIALLO

My name is Mariam Sidi Touré. I am a student in 5th grade at Dioro School 4. Before Gateway, I never went to school, even Koranic school. When I was 9 I enrolled in the Gateway program at Dioro Tintin. At the end of the year, I entered 4th grade at Dioro School 4. I am currently 11 years old and in 5th grade. At the end of my studies, I would like to work at the Dioro Mayor’s Office. My parents are in Dioro Tintin. I have two older brothers who studied at madrassas outside of our village. I have two older sisters, one who lives in Bamako and another who is also in 5th grade at Dioro School 4.

The two students and one teacher from their school, Mr. Oumarou Cissé