



Serving African education:

Setting goals and identifying crucial partnerships

Meskerem (Lily) Mulatu
August 2022

Meskerem (Lily) MULATU

Meskerem (Lily) Mulatu is currently the Advisor for [Human Development - Africa 2 Director](#) (HAWDR) based in Washington DC.

Lily, an Ethiopian national, joined the World Bank as part of the Young Professionals Program. She has worked in several regions for the World Bank: Europe/Central Asia, Middle East/North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia, including a first stint in Dakar, Senegal as a Senior Education Specialist from 2006 to 2009. In September 2014, she moved to the West and Central Africa Region, first as Lead Specialist and then on September 1, 2016 as the Practice Manager. Prior to that, she served in the Europe and Central Asia region from 2009 to 2013 as the Sector Leader for the South Caucasus, working on Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, and spent part of 2014 as the Lead Education Specialist working on Romania and the South Caucasus. Her most recent assignment was as a decentralized Practice Manager for Education, covering 13 countries in West Africa starting in August 2019.

Ms. Mulatu holds a Bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College and a Master in Public Affairs degree from the former Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. Ms. Mulatu has had the opportunity to expand her experiences in human capital development outside the Bank: she served as the World Bank's representative to the Secretariat for Financing for Development at the United Nations in 2000-2001, and spent a year assigned by the World Bank as an adviser to the Superintendent of Schools for the city of Washington, DC in 1998.

She is based in Washington D.C with her three kids.





AFR West/Central Education Strategy

Goals

- ❖ Reduce learning poverty (inability to read and understand a simple text at age 10), reaching 11 million more children by 2025 and 30 million more by 2030.
- ❖ Increase girls' secondary school gross enrollment, reaching 4.6 million more girls in secondary school by 2025 and 12.5 million more by 2030.
- ❖ Expand access to job-relevant skills training reaching 3 million more youth by 2025 and 8 million more by 2030, and training 3.7 million more young adults in foundational skills and 1 million more youth in digital skills by 2025.



Sahel Education White Paper

- ❖ **Reduce learning poverty** (inability to read and understand a simple text at age 10) in the Sahel, reaching 10.2 million more children by 2030.
- ❖ Break the intergenerational cycle of low human capital by **increasing girls' secondary gross enrollment rates**, reaching an additional 2 million girls by 2030.
- ❖ **Increase young adult literacy, especially for young women**, reaching an additional 13.4 million young adults, of which 6.5 million women, by 2030.

The role of communities in ensuring learning impact

Leveraging JICA and World Bank comparative advantages



Communities as key actors

- ❖ In early childhood development, including nutrition, protection, stimulation
- ❖ In basic and secondary schooling, especially in increasing accountability and ensuring continuity, critical for conflict-affected areas
- ❖ In job-related skills, especially in the informal sector
- ❖ In identifying key system reforms that prioritize community ownership and sustainability
- ❖ In lifelong learning



Niger, Grants and Training Pilot (12/12 to 05/14)

- A randomized experiment was conducted in Niger from December 2012 to May 2014 to investigate how communities can effectively utilize school resources;
- For experimental interventions, this study provided school grants and training for SMCs to increase communities' awareness of student learning and improve resource management;
- The result shows that, **when the training was conducted with grant provision, communities increased activities that enhanced student effort, and student test scores in math and French remarkably improved**, particularly for low-performing children.

Source: Kozuka, E. (2018). Enlightening Communities and Parents for Improving Student Learning: Evidence from Randomized Experiment in Niger. *JICA-RI Working Paper No.166*. Tokyo: JICA. Available at https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/publication/workingpaper/I75nbg00000negdj-att/JICA-RI_WP_No.166.pdf.



Niger: Partnership between the World Bank, JICA and GPE

The Government of Niger decided to scale up a JICA-developed **community-based learning improvement model “Minimum Package for Quality Learning (PMAQ)”** in Tillaberi Region, which had over 300,000 primary school learners (G1 – G4) of 3,500 primary schools in 2017-2018;

The scale-up was realized in collaboration with a multi-donor financed project **“PAEQ”, whose grant agent was the World Bank**, and with the technical support of JICA “EPT” project; The impact of this intervention with PMAQ on student math learning is examined in [Maruyama et al. \(2021\)](#).

The average impact on math learning outcomes is estimated to be 0.36 to 0.38 standard deviations.

Data

An experiment to examine the impact of Grants & Training in Niger

- A randomized experiment was conducted in Niger from December 2012 to May 2014 to investigate how communities can effectively utilize school resources;
- For experimental interventions, this study provided school grants and training for SMCs to increase communities' awareness of student learning and improve resource management;
- The result shows that, **when the training was conducted with grant provision (Group 2 as shown below), communities increased activities that enhanced student effort, and student test scores in math and French remarkably improved**, particularly for low-performing children.

Table: Effect on test scores

Interventions	Overall	Mathematics	French
Group 1: "Grants only"	- 0.05 SD	0.01 SD	- 0.07 SD
Group 2: "Grants + Training"	0.34 SD***	0.41 SD***	0.28 SD***
Group 3: Control Group	---	---	---

Note: *** Significant at 1% level

Source: Kozuka, E. (2018). Enlightening Communities and Parents for Improving Student Learning: Evidence from Randomized Experiment in Niger. *JICA-RI Working Paper No.166*. Tokyo: JICA. Available at https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/publication/workingpaper/l75nbg00000negdj-att/JICA-RI_WP_No.166.pdf.