EMiLe project (Education Multi-Langue) aims to raise learning outcomes by developing and implementing a multilingual education (MLE) transfer curriculum which first enables children to acquire reading, writing and math skills in a familiar language. The curriculum then teaches the children to apply those learning skills, concepts, and attitudes to learning and functioning in the official language, French. This innovation currently functions on the micro level (complemented by comparative data) and is disruptive in that no such curriculum currently exists in Senegal, or in many countries of West Africa. (EMiLe could also be understood as incremental in that MLE in east Africa is the policy norm, though rarely implemented.) The EMiLe project is a longitudinal study that intends to continue for several years and will provide much needed data for action research in West Africa. EMiLe is rich in best practices. Its regular monitoring and end of year assessment show that superior learning occurs using the language common to both the children and the teacher, and that pupil learning attitudes are much more positive than in control classes which used only French. Possible ‘spaces’ into which this project could scale are quantitative, functional, political, and organizational. The regranting mechanism used for the project has also worked well. However, the immediate continuation of the EMiLe project is unlikely due to lack of finances. And neither SIL nor ONECS, the project partners, have sufficient capacity to manage an expansion of the initiative. Either a new partner will have to be found or the ONECS bureau will have to be significantly reinforced for sustained effectiveness of the project.
Project Implementation and Capacity Building

In terms of implementation, EMiLe has, through sociolinguistic survey, including school language use mapping, determined that the target group (school children in their first years) of the test area (Fatick) is overwhelmingly monolingual with only a small percentage being functionally bilingual in Wolof and/or French. Some few pupils, recently moved to the Sereer area from other language groups, had become proficient in Sereer by the time they entered first grade.

The project has established a documented theoretical basis for MTBMLE (Mother Tongue Based MLE), developed a curriculum, done extensive advocacy to local communities and national level education authorities, as well as international operators like ELAN. EMiLe has produced an impressive array of learning/teaching materials (over 150 titles of learning/teaching materials), conducted teacher training, monitoring, measured learning increases as compared to a baseline, and has compared those learning outcomes with a control group. Project partners include SIL, Ministry of Education and Catholic Education. EMiLe, as funded by TrustAfrica, focuses on the L1 to L2 transition component of the larger project which also includes reading skills acquisition in L1 and developing a new curriculum for teaching French (L2) as a foreign language applicable in both bilingual and traditional classes.

As regards capacity building, the EMiLe project has greatly benefited from the expertise of SIL and the access to public and private schools through the MoE and ONECS (Catholic Education). Project malfunction was, however, significant in the first and beginning of the second year due to different management routines among partners. This resulted in a one year delay in launching classes and the shortening by half of the initial teacher training. Additional in-service teacher training was quickly organized to attempt to compensate. Due to a precarious funding environment, the future of EMiLe is uncertain. SIL, however, remains committed to providing technical input.

Technical capacity building from TrustAfrica to EMiLe focused on M&E, as partners were already competent in their other respective areas. Significant discussion and study of assessment materials and evaluation results was facilitated by TrustAfrica and included interaction with ARED. Neither SIL nor ONECS have sufficient capacity to manage an expansion of this project. Either a new partner will have to be found or the ONECS bureau will have to be significantly reinforced.

Progress and the measurement

As specified in the M&E plan, the theoretical base and resultant curriculum have been documented. Due to the delay of one year, project implementation now covers only the first two grades. Teacher performance is being monitored by project staff and IEF (Inspection d’Education Formelle) personnel trained to that end and equipped with a teacher/classroom observation tool. Teachers and IEF are gathered periodically for formative evaluation purposes. Regular monitoring and end of year assessment show that superior learning occurs using the language common to both the children and the teacher and that pupil learning attitudes are much more positive than in control classes which used only French. Partnership coordination difficulties have been resolved.

EMiLe conducted a rigorous baseline and end line learning level assessment in the first and second year of classes with effective and reliable assessment tools and procedures.
Results and Analysis

The comparison between test classes and control classes shows a significantly higher increase in learning outcomes among test classes. This measurement should be assigned a high degree of confidence given the superior quality of the tools, procedures and analysis. All tools and procedures have been well documented.

EMiLe has also produced a thorough written basis and justification for their learning module, including manuals and formative evaluation to assure quality sustained practice.

EMiLe has learned to function well within this small innovation ecosystem but will require partnership with others if up scaled. See discussion below on Scaling Up.

Scaling

The immediate continuation of the EMiLe project is unlikely due to lack of finances. Possible ‘spaces’ into which this project could scale include the quantitative, functional, political, and organizational components. As this is the only *sequential transfer curriculum development project currently underway, it has great potential to become a best practice point of reference for subsequent programs. It could be scaled quantitatively (growth/expansion) by EMiLe within the same language.

Technically, a very similar program could be replicated in other languages, likely requiring collaboration or franchising with other partners. The same could be said for potential national or international scaling. While the present capacity of the EMiLe structure may be surpassed depending on the space into which the project is scaled up, EMiLe personnel could continue in the role of technical advisors, if the project were to be managed by others.

Functionally, the same or similar transfer process could be used in adult literacy programs and has implications for other purposes such as language learning for groups other than schools. Politically and organizationally, the transfer process would be very useful to the MoE, Catholic Education, or ELAN. SIL, MoEs and others would benefit from the completion of the EMiLe longitudinal study and from the development of the sequential language use model in Francophone Africa. Catholic Education will continue project implementation, to the extent that their finances will allow, supported by SIL technical input.

USAID has only recently, June 2015, shown interest in the EMiLe project, including a visit to SIL and later to an EMiLe class in the Fatick area. Should USAID follow through on this initial show of interest, they could become a valuable collaborator. World Vision has decided not to continue its support for this program. ELAN remains a potential partner despite their own apparent funding limitations. As momentum builds for MTBMLE in Senegal (driver), the MoE will likely become more interested in exploiting the pioneer work done by EMiLe in order to realize its own intentions. EMiLe would be better positioned to help the MoE if it had the resources to maintain project activities in the meantime.

Lessons Learned

- Partnership can often lead to delays and loss of effectiveness as partners work out their different operating routines. Having now learned better, this experience has informed partnership discussions and has resulted in a more stable partnership.
- The partner that offers a smaller share of the overall resources, as is the case for TrustAfrica in this project, may find that their goals and activities are de-
prioritized in deference to those of other larger contributors. In this case, this tendency was redressed early, and EMiLe was careful to comply with all expectations.

- Teacher training is one of a series of essential events that must occur in a particular sequence and with a particular quality in order for the project as a whole to be effective. An inadequate execution of any one of the essential events, such as teacher training, must be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

- Even when originally reticent, popular and official opinion can be swayed by effective advocacy done with respect and patience. In this case, MoE opinion was that parents would not accept national language education. Upon further investigation, it was found that parents had not been well sensitized to the issue. The MoE ‘survey’ asked parents to choose between French OR national language education. It would have been more accurate to ask if parents would prefer one or the other or BOTH. Once adequate effort was made to discuss the nature of multi-lingual education, parents overwhelmingly preferred MLE education in both languages.

- Good/adequate practice, even if not best practice, can still be acceptable so far as it is seen as much better than poor practice. When the benefits of best practice remain unknown/untried, then good/adequate practice becomes acceptable and risks becoming the standard of quality. While the EMiLe model, by its own admission, currently falls short of their ideal additive and late exit preference, the results of its implementation are better than those of the typical French-only ApC model (Approche par les compétences) and so is likely to become an acceptable standard of education program design.

- EMiLe is a package of innovations, improvements, and execution of good practice. The presence or absence of all these elements should be taken into account when considering any scaling up or franchising of the EMiLe model. If some of these good practices were to be absent, then the effectiveness of the process could be diminished. Any future application of the EMiLe model should therefore assure that all project components are included.

- The re-granting mechanism worked well in this case. This is due to the fact that SIL’s reputation was well known by the Panel of Experts, resulting in a prompt approval and allowing adequate coordination of project activities with the scholastic calendar. That SIL had already been implicated in the MTBMLE domain both nationally and internationally meant that the needed expertise and structures were immediately available.
Recommendations

1. This project should be positively considered for a validation grant to enable continuation of the longitudinal study, development of the sequential model and quantitative expansion. The innovation, that of creating and executing a sequential MLE transfer module from L1 to L2 in the context of both traditional and experimental schools, is both novel and an improvement. Though the concept and practice may exist in East Africa, its application in this context is unique and is driven by the increasing up-take of MLE by regional and international actors. That the innovation is an important improvement is plausibly evidenced in the evaluation data. EMiLe should be considered at least a ‘promising practice’, and, combined with evidence from similar experiments in Cameroon and Asia, could be appreciated as a ‘model’ or even as a ‘good practice’.

2. Care should be taken to assure that technical aspects, including positive mitigating circumstances and best practices, are not compromised by lack of management capacity.

3. EMiLe should maintain its good relationships with potential up scalers such as the MoE, Catholic Education and ELAN. Excellent personal relationships also exist with ARED which has complementary strengths in networking with the MoE as well as other national organizations and so could be a more effective driver.

The EMiLe MLE model differs significantly from the ARED MLE model. EMiLe has created a sequential knowledge, skill, and attitude transfer model. This model first develops oral and reading skills in the local language while gradually introducing oral skills in French. Firstly, the orthographical inventory of the L1 is taught. Having mastered the rudiments of L1 reading, the curriculum then transfers those skills to French, noting the similarities in sound/symbol relationships between the two orthographies and intentionally teaching those differences in pronunciation between the letters shared in the two orthographies. In contrast, the ARED approach seeks to teach both L1 and French orthography simultaneously, presenting the same orthographical element in the same day despite differences of pronunciation in various word positions. ARED has reported that this has led to significant confusion among teachers and students while, none the less, being more effective than the traditional French-only approach.