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SENEGAL

SUCCESS STORY

Training Boosts Student Achievement

Classroom management, ethics and evaluation among courses taught



Photo: USAID/Senegal/Richard Nyberg

Yarri Déme, principal at the USAID-financed middle school in remote Salémata, discusses how he encouraged teachers and pupils to reach a high level of academic performance.

“[The training] provided me with the knowledge of what it means to be a good principal, and gave me the tools to become one,” said Yarri Déme, principal of the Salémata Middle School.

Principal Yarri Déme is passionate about education. For more than 20 years, Yarri has worked in education, starting as a teacher in Thiès and now the principal of a rural middle school in the village of Salémata, near Senegal’s southern border with Guinea, since 2006. Through training provided under USAID’s middle school education project, Yarri has increased student success rates by 40% -- a figure almost unheard of in student achievement.

From his first day in Salémata, Yarri faced a daunting task. USAID had just built a rural middle school in a region where often children did not go to middle school because of the long distances by foot to the closest school. The new school provided the first opportunity for many to continue their education beyond the sixth grade. The community was so happy to have a middle school that over 400 pupils enrolled. The new principal faced the challenges of meeting their needs while also addressing issues as the dearth of teaching resources and the best use of untrained teachers.

USAID supported Yarri through training to more than 7,600 middle school principals and teachers in all of Senegal’s 11 regions. Along with the other principals and teachers, Yarri and his faculty profited from courses in classroom management; student-centered learning techniques; ethics and professional behavior; and monitoring and evaluation. Yarri said, “[The training] provided me with the knowledge of what it means to be a good principal, and gave me the tools to become one.”

Yarri and the teachers of Salémata Middle School have proven how training can impact student achievement. Before the training of teachers and principals, the success rate of students passing the 10th grade certificate in Salémata was 55%; today, it stands at 77%.