

ELAN

École et langues nationales

La Francophonie and bi-/multilingual education: The School and National Languages (ELAN) initiative

Framework document



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CONTENTS

List of acronyms.....	5
Introduction.....	6
1. Scientific foundations of bi-/multilingual education and international trends	7
2. Programmatic principles of the ELAN initiative	12
2.1. Anchored in African education systems.....	12
2.2. System-wide coverage of the education system with its “bilingual” component	13
2.3. Informed by piloting in the field.....	14
3. Characteristics of ELAN's bi-/multilingual education approach	14
3.1. The ELAN approach	14
3.2. ELAN's teaching innovations	17
3.3. Production of teaching resources and materials.....	22
4. ELAN's system-wide actions	23
Conclusion	32
Suggested thematic bibliography	34
Annex A: Glossary of terms and concepts.....	42
Annex B: Educational resources and materials produced by ELAN	46



LIST OF ACRONYMS

ARED	Associates in Research and Education for Development
COC	Curriculum Framework [<i>Cadre d'orientation curriculaire</i>]
CONFEMEN	Conference of Ministers of Education of the States and Governments of Francophonie [<i>Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États et Gouvernements de la Francophonie</i>]
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ELAN	School and National Languages [<i>École et langues nationales</i>]
IFEF	Institute of La Francophonie for Education and Training [<i>Institut de la Francophonie pour l'éducation et de la formation</i>]
UNESCO-IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
LASCOLAF	Languages of basic education in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa [<i>Les langues de scolarisation dans l'enseignement fondamental en Afrique subsaharienne francophone</i>]
L1	First language (See Glossary of Terms in Appendix A)
L2	Second or additional language (See Glossary of Terms in Appendix A)
LMIC	Low- and middle-income countries
MEN	Ministry of National Education [<i>Ministère de l'Éducation nationale</i>] (Senegal)
MENALN	Ministry of National Education, Literacy, and National Languages [<i>Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'alphabétisation et des langues nationales</i>] (Burkina Faso)
MOHEBS	Harmonized model of bilingual education in Senegal [<i>Modèle harmonisé de l'enseignement bilingue au Sénégal</i>]
NL	National language
OIF	International Organization of La Francophonie [<i>Organisation internationale de la Francophonie</i>]
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended for stakeholders involved in bilingual reforms and their implementation in countries at the institutional, logistical, pedagogical, didactic, and financial levels. These include officials from ministries of education, teachers trainers at the pre-service and in-service levels, educators, researchers, and technical and financial partners associated or to be associated with the *École et langues nationales* (ELAN) program.

This text aims to define the ELAN initiative's objectives, approach, and scientific foundations, led by the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) and implemented by its Institute of La Francophonie for Education and Training (IFEFF). For more than 20 years, the Francophonie has been promoting bi-/multilingual education and supporting its member countries in this area. Its ELAN initiative has been working towards this goal in sub-Saharan Africa since 2012.

ELAN currently supports 10 French-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mauritania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Togo) in implementing high-quality bilingual and multilingual education based on learners' first language (L1)—often shared by teachers—with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning. In this region, learners' L1 generally corresponds to endogenous African languages, commonly referred to as national languages, which are still insufficiently valued and equipped as languages of instruction. French is still very often the only official language of instruction—often not mastered or only poorly mastered by these learners. Bilingual education therefore offers learners the opportunity to acquire one or more languages beyond their L1 by facilitating interlinguistic transfer between the L1 and the L2 (second language). Improving learners' language skills through bilingual education, in both the L1 and the L2, also leads to improved learning outcomes in non-linguistic subjects. In ELAN's partner countries, the L2 is French.

The bi-/multilingual education promoted by IFEFF through ELAN is in line with scientific guidelines and international recommendations that have demonstrated the competitive advantages of bi-/multilingual education in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). ELAN supports its implementation through a system-wide approach, working on many distinct yet interconnected aspects within national education systems.

This document highlights the ELAN initiative's scientific foundations, as well as the system-wide actions carried out and the tools produced over the last 13 years. It situates this initiative in relation to other similar experiments and existing terminology, mentioning points of convergence and divergence in terms of theory and methodology.

This document has been prepared by a team of two members of ELAN's scientific

committee who have been involved in the program since its inception, and two international specialists in bilingual and multilingual education, with the support of ELAN coordination team within the IFEF.

1. Scientific foundations of bi-/multilingual education and international trends

The ELAN initiative, led by the IFEF, promotes and supports the principles of bi-/multilingual education, consistent with the activities of numerous international education stakeholders.

Target 4.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), signed by **193 countries** at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, calls on countries to:

“By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations” (UNGA, 2015).

It is estimated that 37% of learners in LMICs—the vast majority of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa—still do not receive education in a language they use and understand (Crawford & Marin, 2021). This raises the crucial question of the language of instruction. One of the key dimensions of equity is whether the language(s) of instruction enable learners to access initial and continuing literacy and other curricular content.

To this end, the scientific community and international and governmental agencies have long advocated for bi-/multilingual education, also known as L1-based Multilingual Education (MLE) (UNESCO, 2025; Ouane & Glanz, 2011). This means using learners’ home languages as a foundation and working in more than one language of instruction (the bi- aspect) or more than two languages (the multi- or pluri- aspect in French) depending on the context in multilingual countries.

According to numerous experiments conducted and evaluated in diverse countries, the advantages of bilingual and multilingual education are now well established. These advantages include increased school attendance (Benson, 2005), a greater likelihood that girls and minorities remain in school (Benson, 2005), improved academic performance (Ouane & Glanz, 2011; Evans & Acosta, 2021; Heugh et al.; 2007), and cost-effectiveness (Crawford & Marin, 2021; Heugh, 2011). Many of these benefits stem from the fact that learners develop strong cognitive and linguistic skills in their L1 (first or home language), which are then transferred to their L2 (second or additional

language) (Cummins, 2021). Similarly, research has also shown that late-exit (additive) bilingual education leads to better academic outcomes because learners need at least six to seven years of instruction in their L1 and four to eight years of instruction in L2 to become proficient in both languages (Collier & Thomas, 2017).

Although it is well established that long-term investment in reading and writing in L1 leads to strong skills in L2 through interlinguistic transfer, many countries offering bilingual education use the learner's language for only one to three years in an “early exit transitional” model (Heugh 2011). Research shows that this model is better than monolingual education entirely in L2; however, it remains a fragile and *subtractive* approach because learners do not have enough time to develop the necessary skills in both languages to effectuate the transfer (Bialystok et al. 2005; Cummins 2009, 2021). Early-exit programs can be improved if learners have the opportunity to study the L1 as a subject until the end of primary school, but the results would be much better if they benefited from a truly bi-/multilingual program throughout their education.

Globally, many countries have already committed to using national languages as languages of instruction in their education systems. In Latin America, countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru have implemented a particular form of bi-/multilingual education known as *educación intercultural bilingüe* (EIB) or bilingual intercultural education in Indigenous languages alongside Spanish (López, 2010). In Mexico, for example, more than 22,000 Indigenous schools had adopted EIB by 2019, and progress has been made in developing curricular standards for preschool and primary education (SEP, 2019) as well as in establishing Indigenous universities (Castillo, 2022). In the Asia-Pacific region, the last two decades have seen movement towards mother tongue-based multilingual education (or MTB-MLE) in countries with no previous experience of using the L1, such as Cambodia, Thailand, and Timor-Leste (Kosonen, 2017), and the strengthening of L1-based MLE policies and practices in countries such as India (Jhingran, 2019) and the Philippines (Arzadon, 2024)¹.

In so-called Anglophone African countries, initiatives continue to develop. The strongest policies in favor of national languages in education are those of Eritrea and Ethiopia, which use national languages for instruction during the eight years of primary education. In 2023, Ethiopia revised its 1994 education and training policy to include 22 national languages alongside the national working language, Amharic, and the international language, English (Heugh et al., 2012; Abbagidi & Tsegai, 2024). South Africa, whose 1994 language policy in education designated nine languages (Ndebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Southern Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, and Zulu) to be used in addition to English and Afrikaans, strengthened its implementation of

¹ The Philippines, which officially launched its 2009 policy known as mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in 2012-2013, has unfortunately suffered a recent political setback. Educators hope that the advances made in bilingual curricula, teacher training, and materials development will not be lost (Cansino, 2023).

mother tongue-based bilingual education (MTBBE) in 2024 and now supports teaching in African home languages beyond the third year of primary school.²

Among so-called Lusophone countries, Mozambique stands out for its successful experiment using Xichangana and Chinyanja home languages alongside Portuguese in the 1990s. The 2002 curriculum reform called for the expansion of bilingual education as an option at the school district level. This policy was formally reinforced in a 2018 education law authorizing the use of 19 national languages and gradual, sustainable scaling up at the national level to at least double the number of bilingual schools, which stood at 700 at the time. Unlike the previous early-exit transition model (2003-2019), the new medium-term model extends the use of the L1 alongside the L2 through the sixth year of study (Manuel et al., 2025).

In so-called Francophone countries, the governments of Senegal and Burkina Faso, for example, are to be commended for their commitment to bilingual education. In 2021 the Senegalese Ministry of National Education approved a framework document for a harmonized model, the Harmonized model of bilingual education in Senegal [*le Modèle harmonisé de l'enseignement bilingue au Sénégal* (MOHEBS)], following numerous successful experiments in bilingual education conducted by various institutions between 2008 and 2016³, including ELAN, the OIF-IFEF initiative discussed here. This document describes the modalities for a progressive scaling up of bilingual education across Senegal and is regularly revised in line with developments in the field. The latest update in 2024 recommends an early-exit bilingual education model in the third and fourth years of primary school. However, it also states an intention to extend the use of the L1 through the end of the primary cycle and even into more advanced levels—middle school, high school, and university—depending on the progress of this reform. In Burkina Faso, a similar harmonization process has taken place, and the education authorities officially adopted the Reference Framework for Bi- and Multilingual Education in Burkina Faso [*le Cadre de référence de l'éducation bi-plurilingue au Burkina Faso*] in an executive order in 2024.

The Conference of Ministers of Education of the States and Governments of the Francophonie (CONFEMEN, 2022) produced a discussion and guidance document entitled “First Language and Language of Instruction: What strategy(ies) can facilitate early learning, academic success, and social cohesion in the 21st century?” [*Langue*

² For the latest official decisions and their implementation, see : <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-/2025-02-17-a-step-towards-multilingualism-and-equity-in-south-african-education>

³ ELAN-Afrique (2012-2016; 2016-2023); EMiLe (2009-2013), a Sereer-French bilingual education program by World Vision Senegal, the National Office for Catholic Education in Senegal, and SIL International; ADLAS (reinforcement courses, 2007-2008; formal classes, 2009-2011; 2011-2014 funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for Saafi-Saafi-French programs; ARED's simultaneous or concurrent bilingual education funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation from 2009 to 2013, then by Dubai Cares from 2014 to 2019 (MWAI, 2019). Other experiences that are not bilingual education but use national languages include Lecture Pour Tous (LPT), the Early Grade Reading (EGR) program with USAID from 2016 to 2021, and Renforcement pour la Lecture Initiale (RELIT), its extension from 2021 to 2025 with USAID, ARED, and the Gates Foundation.

première et langue d'enseignement : Quelle(s) stratégie(s) pour faciliter les premiers apprentissages, la réussite scolaire et le vivre-ensemble au XXI^e siècle ?] which describes the modalities for the gradual and pragmatic implementation of explicitly additive bilingual and multilingual education. Since its launch, ELAN has been working in line with this same approach and supports the ten French-speaking countries following the same principles.



© Photo: Destination Francophonie, guided reading activity in a bilingual Kabiyé-French class in Togo, 2024.

It should be noted that bi-/multilingual education and *Early Grade Reading* (EGR) programs supported by the former USAID and its partners do not cover the same areas of action. Bi-/multilingual education develops the mother tongue and other languages across all language skills (oral and written comprehension, reading, writing) and across curricular content (mathematics, science, etc.), going far beyond simple decoding. However, some of the skills targeted by EGR programs can be integrated into bi-/multilingual education, as the ELAN program has done by teaching grapheme-phoneme decoding using its tools.



© Photo: OIF, guided reading activity in a bilingual Ewondo-French second-grade class in Cameroon, 2017.

Early Grade Reading Programs

Over the past two decades, *Early Grade Reading* (EGR) programs and their assessment tool, *Early Grade Reading Assessment* (EGRA), have increasingly been used to assess and improve reading outcomes, which are considered the foundation of learning.

The EGR approach centers teaching on the correspondence between letters and sounds and therefore on phonemic awareness and decoding, regardless of how the language is constructed. Some (Schroeder, 2013, 2020; Schroeder et al., 2024) have noted that not all languages lend themselves to such linear phonetic approaches. In ELAN's multilingual approach, the emphasis is on the linguistic specificity of each language, comprehension, bilingualism, and interlinguistic transfer from one language to another. In addition, EGR programs take a cognitive science perspective called the “*science of reading*”, focusing primarily on reading in one language and targeting the first three years of primary school.

This perspective is controversial, particularly among specialists in bi-/multilingual education⁴. In general, EGR programs propose using L1 when the government allows it to improve reading performance, but the phonemic or syntactic relationships between L1 and L2 (interlinguistic transfer) are not developed. The balance between comprehension, oral expression, reading, and writing is not always respected, whether in the L1 or L2. Despite these issues, ELAN was inspired by EGRA assessment tools, as grapheme-phoneme decoding is incorporated into ELAN's approach, making these tools relevant for some of the skills developed—but not all. They need to be supplemented by other instruments that assess comprehension and, for example, written expression. The EGRA tools were adapted in part for the longitudinal assessment of learners' achievement in the ELAN pilot classes conducted in 2015-2016 by the Research Center on Education at the University of Nantes [*Centre de recherche en éducation de l'Université de Nantes* (CREN)]

EGR programs are frequently associated with Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) and structured pedagogy, which is often criticized for not taking into account the sociocultural aspects of teaching and learning (Hoadley, 2024).

2. Programmatic principles of the ELAN initiative

While aligned with the international movement and scientific orientation aforementioned, the ELAN initiative is gradually being rolled out in line with a vision of contextualized bi-/multilingual education based on the following principles.

2.1. Anchored in African education systems

The ELAN initiative acts as a true partner, taking into account a country's desire to introduce and/or generalize national languages as languages of instruction alongside French.

⁴ See the well-documented summary in: <https://moramodules.com/2024/10/25/science-of-reading-a-critique/>

First and foremost, the technical and financial support that ELAN provides complies with the language-in-education policies set out in national framework laws, strategic plans, and curriculum frameworks (COC). ELAN supports countries' education systems in their bilingual education reforms in line with existing structures and mechanisms, taking national and regional contexts into consideration. The ELAN program adapts its approach to each country's linguistic and cultural specificities, particularly in terms of language-specific textbook and activity book design, and in accordance with the country's curricular approach.

The approach of building on and strengthening existing education structures and mechanisms ensures the development of bilingual programs that are coherently integrated into each country's school system.



© Photo: MINEDUB, visit to a bilingual Ewondo-French class, part of the ELAN program, Cameroon, 2024.

2.2. System-wide coverage of the education system with its “bilingual” component

The ELAN initiative takes a system-wide approach, covering various aspects of bi-/multilingual education reform, far removed from compartmentalized or isolated actions. ELAN supports long-term planning as part of the reform process, in line with each country's vision and strategic plan. This support ranges from collaborative preparation of a roadmap, sociolinguistic surveys, and language-in-education policy planning, to supporting classroom teachers, including initial training and continuing professional development, production of teaching tools, monitoring and evaluation of bi-/multilingual education, and action research.

2.3. Informed by piloting in the field

The ELAN initiative is now backed by more than a decade of successful pilot programs and implementation in various education systems, despite the challenges inherent in the implementation processes specific to each country.

ELAN has conducted pilots in a variety of multilingual contexts in Francophone Africa. Following the field-based validation of its approach, ELAN has evolved in each country of implementation by developing teaching tools, adapting to identified needs, and working with national experts to steer, monitor, and train stakeholders in the implementation of bi-/multilingual education. ELAN experiments in some African countries have been the subject of both internal and external evaluations (CREN, 2016; Le Vif du sujet 2017; UNICEF Burkina Faso Evaluation 2017; TDS Group 2024). These evaluations have demonstrated the added value of ELAN for learners and learning outcomes, particularly in reading and writing. Since 2024, assessment tools have been designed and adapted to evaluate bilingual competencies with a dual focus: formative, aimed at remediation and grounded in an inclusive approach to addressing learning difficulties; and summative, intended to identify and quantify the skills acquired in reading, writing, and mathematics in both languages. This work has involved three countries: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

3. Characteristics of ELAN's bi-/multilingual education approach

3.1. The ELAN approach

Since the ELAN initiative works in partnership with governments in a variety of sociolinguistic and educational contexts and situations (see Section 2), ELAN itself does not have a predefined model of bi-/multilingual education. The model is rather adapted to the context, the national language-in-education policy, and pre-existing conditions of the education system. Meanwhile, ELAN adheres to internationally recognized principles of bi-/multilingual education, as outlined here. Where conditions are not conducive to these principles, ELAN advocates for their integration—for example, when the number of years of L1 skill development is insufficient or when the L2 is introduced too early as a language of instruction. These principles are:

- **Taking an additive approach: Skills acquired in L1 and L2 reinforce each other (Cummins, 2021)**
 - ✿ The bi-/multilingual education approach advocated by IFEF through ELAN is additive in nature, using both languages as languages of instruction until the end of the elementary cycle.
 - ✿ From this additive perspective, both languages are languages of instruction in succession and in ways that complement each other.
 - ✿ The teaching approach is based on a theory positing that all languages in the world perform the same cognitive processes (naming, qualifying, situating

in time, etc.), even if they do so with different and sometimes very specific tools. Studying how the L1 functions prepares students to find identical, similar, different, or distinct qualities in an L2 (Maurer, 2025). This theory is the basis for teaching how the L1 functions and for taking opportunities to teach for transfer between languages.

- **Using systematic and explicit didactic methods (García, 2011)**

- ✿ ELAN advocates an approach focused on the questions "How can African languages and French be taught?" and "How can teaching be done in African languages?" These two questions are **didactic** in nature, **questioning the content of teaching and the way in which it is constructed linguistically**. They are therefore in line with García's (2011) definition of bi-/multilingual education programs as those that use learners' languages **systematically** and **deliberately** for **literacy and learning**, accompanied by **explicit** teaching of new languages. ELAN's contribution to the field lies in its didactic innovations in the teaching and learning of the L1 and the L2 as well as bilingual teaching of school curriculum subjects, and particularly its didactics of interlinguistic transfer (see section 3.2).
- ✿ In the methods for teaching reading recommended by ELAN, particular emphasis is placed on comprehension in combination with decoding, using a simple metalanguage that is accessible to the learner. The method invites learners to identify language elements linked to the lesson's reading and then to review their understanding of these elements, both orally and in their own writing, which they develop alongside their reading. The teacher shows them how to pronounce, read, interpret, and write, and how to extract meaning from a text. This approach is indirectly inspired by the cognitive process of learning to read, which is explained in a simplified and adapted way by the teacher; it is also likely to facilitate and prepare learners for autonomy in their reading and writing tasks, both in their L1 and in French.
- ✿ From this point of view, this method is similar to the "explicit teaching" pedagogical approach (Gauthier, 2013) yet specifically applied to the type of activities designed for teaching relationships between the two languages.

- **Developing skills in L1 and L2 throughout the primary curriculum (Heugh, 2011)**

- ✿ Consistent with Cummins (1979), there is a consensus among researchers that the transition should take place after a significant number of hours of L2 instruction (French in the case of ELAN), as long as possible, and preferably not before fifth grade. The time when there is a change in the language of instruction (**sometimes referred to as transition, not to be confused with *transfer*, which is a cognitive mechanism**) should not occur before learners have developed reasoning, production, and comprehension skills in L2 that enable them to continue learning in L2 without any

disruption in their progress or even regression.

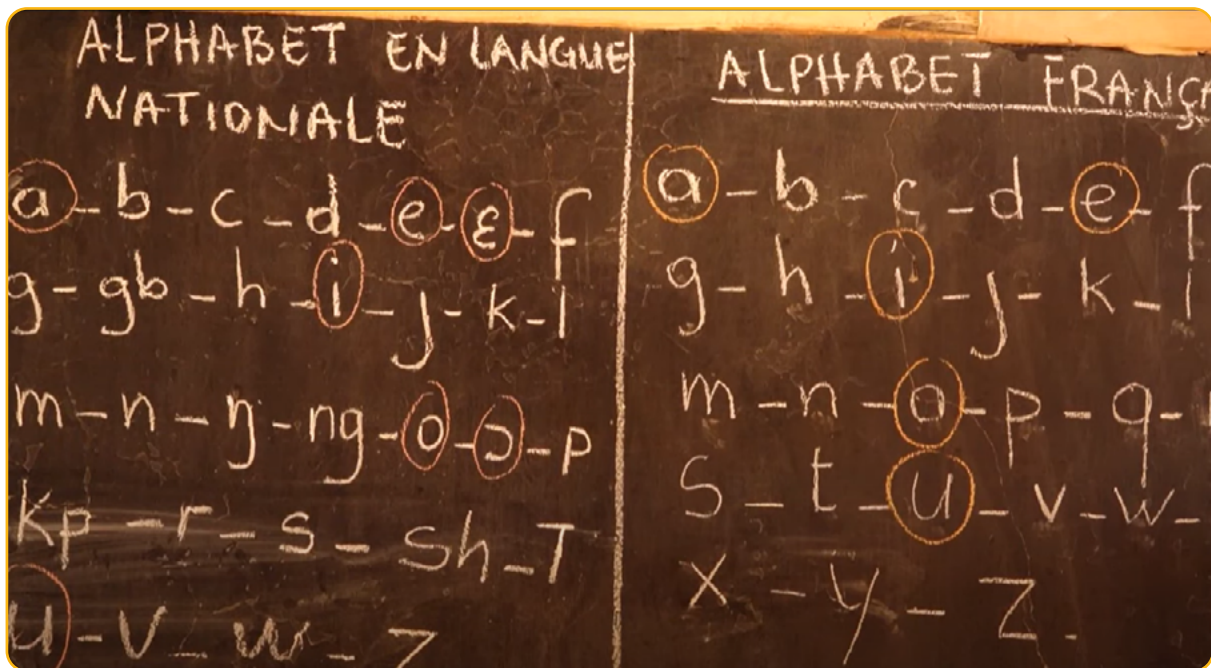
- ✿ Stating this principle here does not mean that all countries partnering with ELAN implement bi-/multilingual education and comply with it. As noted, countries are sovereign and make their own decisions. IFEF, through ELAN, can only make recommendations and provide support in the form of tools, but cannot act as a substitute for the state. The transition therefore sometimes takes place earlier than recommended, which causes difficulties and runs counter to what research on bi-/multilingual education has shown (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Ouane & Glanz, 2011).

- **Integrating into the educational approach of the national education system**

- ✿ The ELAN program is designed to be integrated into the national education system's curricular and pedagogical approach. As a result, **ELAN does not address the more general aspects of pedagogical design or the organization of the teacher-learner relationship. The initiative is therefore compatible with all pedagogical and curricular approaches adopted by ministries of education, but particularly those that place the learner at the center of learning and reflection**, like structured pedagogy and explicit pedagogy. These two approaches in particular enable ELAN's bi-/multilingual teaching guidelines to be effective.



© Photo: OIF/Dixon, visit to an ELAN bilingual class in Senegal, 2017.



© Photo: France 24, bilingual learning activity in a Dioula-French bilingual class supported by ELAN in Côte d'Ivoire, 2025.

3.2. ELAN's teaching innovations

Beyond adhering to international principles of bi-/multilingual education, IFEF through its ELAN program contributes to the advancement of bilingual and multilingual education through the following teaching innovations:

- **Using L1 as the primary language of instruction**

ELAN's main contribution to language teaching lies in the development of a methodology for teaching African languages as first languages (Maurer, 2001) rather than as a poor imitation of foreign language instruction. Early attempts to teach African languages as L1s were, in fact, modeled on approaches used for teaching French as a foreign language. In foreign language instruction, learners are introduced and taught everyday speech acts such as greeting people, introducing themselves, asking the price of something, etc. However, learners being taught in their own L1s already possess these communicative competencies and do not require explicit instructions in such speech acts.

L1 teaching starts from what the learner already knows and focuses on:

- ▶ communicative skills not learned in the environment such as reading, writing, and complex oral behaviors (arguing, narrating, summarizing, synthesizing);
- ▶ analyzing how the L1 works using a metalinguistic approach and constructivist teaching methods, where learners take an active role in learning about how their own languages work, which prepares them to transfer skills from the L1 to the L2. This is a necessary condition for true academic bilingualism.

By modifying and clarifying the objectives of L1 teaching, ELAN has helped to reinforce the importance of teaching these languages.

The distribution between languages of instruction and the different skills targeted according to level/year depends on national curricula, with ELAN facilitating the decision-making process with regard to the number of hours and other curricular parameters.

- **Creating a method to teach for transfer**

At the heart of ELAN's bilingual education approach is the concept of transfer and the design of a method of teaching to promote transfer. This notion of transfer developed by Cummins (1979) has been further developed by Maurer and Puren (2019). What does it entail ?

It is a simple idea: The skills built in one language are used to learn another language better and faster.

Teaching for transfer is grounded in the principle that L2 learning should begin with elements that are most similar to the L1, in order to facilitate learners' progress and build their confidence.

Transfer is a cognitive process through which literacy and skills developed in a strong language (L1) do not need to be relearned in another language. Over time and with exposure to both (or all) languages, learners transfer their phonological awareness (sound–symbol correspondence), specific linguistic elements (vocabulary), pragmatic aspects (meaningful gestures), conceptual knowledge (e.g., photosynthesis), and metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies (e.g., comparison and contrast) (Cummins, 2021). Specific types of transfer, as detailed below, can be distinguished by their qualifiers (linguistic and cultural transfer, communicative transfer, learning strategy transfer) or by their mode (direct or scenario-based).

Initially, an analysis is made of the similarities and differences between two languages of a bilingual education system. This is what has been done in the **bilingual grammars** produced by the OIF with linguistic experts in different African languages. For each linguistic or cultural aspect (phonetics, lexicon, morphology, syntax, writing system, sociocultural practices), two languages/cultures can be :

- ▶ **identical** (zero degree of distance)
- ▶ **different** (medium degree)
- ▶ **unique** (maximum degree)

There are several types of transfer, depending on the particular skill or knowledge:

- ▶ **Cultural transfer:** the process of using a cultural element (in the anthropological sense of the term) from the L1 speaker's cultural background (or the L2) to learn cultural elements expressed in the L2 (or an additional language), through a process of recognizing shared and different cultural practices and values;
- ▶ **Linguistic transfer:** the process of using a linguistic element (lexical, morphosyntactic, phonetic) from the L1's linguistic universe (or the L2) to learn the L2 (or an additional language);
- ▶ **Communicative transfer:** the process of using components of communication (production, comprehension, written, or oral skills) acquired in the L1 (or the L2) – already present, already constructed – to learn the L2 (or an additional language);
- ▶ **Transfer of learning strategies:** the process of using a language learning strategy employed in the L1 (and/or the L2) to learn the L2 (and/or an additional language).

Finally, it should be noted that transfer occurs in two ways in the classroom: directly (automatically) or with the help of a scenario.

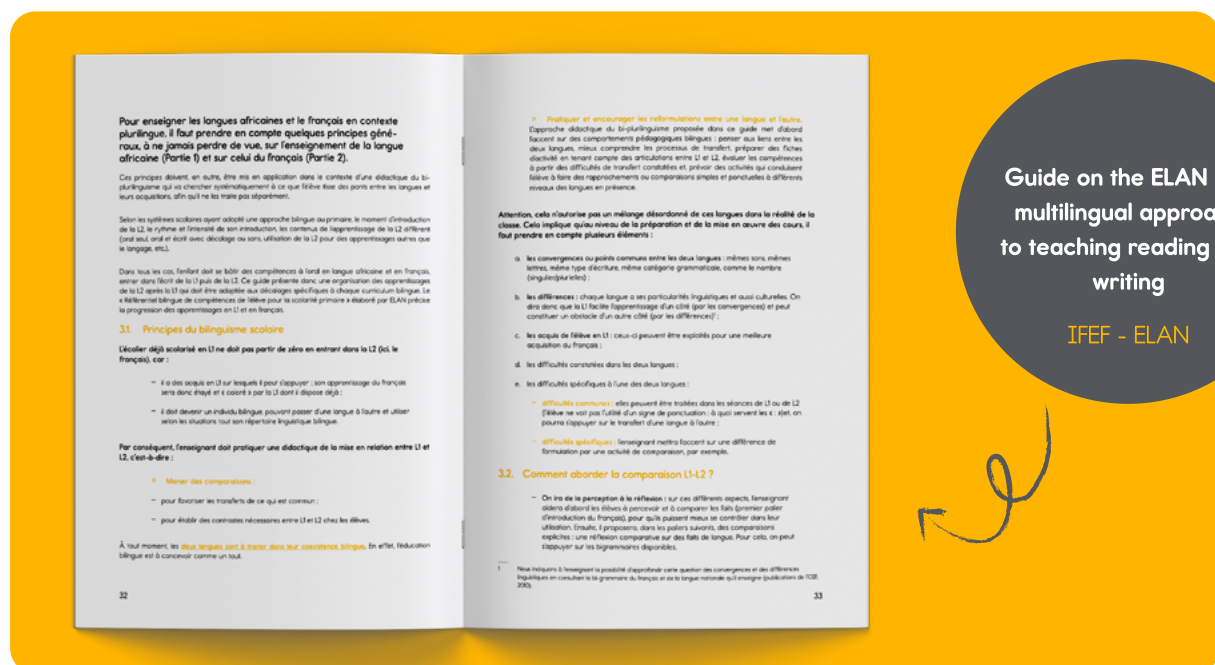
- ▶ **Transfer scenarios:** a coherent series of progressive activities that use manipulation, conceptualization, reinforcement, and revision for the discovery, memorization, integration, and use of different or unique elements in the L2 (or additional language). The transfer scenario is initially based on the knowledge learners already have and/or have already constructed in the L1.
- ▶ **Transfert direct:** mode de transfert utilisé dans les cas où les formes langagières sont identiques ou similaires et ne nécessitent pas de scénario de transfert. Le transfert s'opère alors par simple transposition d'une langue à l'autre, par calque.



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- **Developing teaching methods for reading and writing**

ELAN's approach to teaching reading is based on the same principles of decoding grapheme-phoneme correspondences (phonological procedure) (Dehaene, 2011; EGR). The orthographic or lexical procedure (Sprenger-Charolle and Collé, 2003) is also used to train learners to recognize written words ("sight words"), which is a reflex action for a good reader. This enables beginner readers to achieve a level of reading comprehension equal to that of their oral comprehension. From the beginning, work is done on oral comprehension of stories (listening), then on written comprehension as the ability to decode and recognize written units develops (reading). Particular attention is paid to making inferences from the text, which is an essential mechanism of comprehension (Giasson, 2011). The method of teaching reading developed by ELAN is detailed in a 2015 guide, updated in 2019 and revised in 2023, entitled *Guide d'orientation à l'approche bi-plurilingue en lecture-écriture* [Guidance on the bi-/multilingual approach to reading and writing].



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Regarding the methods of teaching reading, ELAN stands out by not limiting itself to decoding, and by integrating oral and written comprehension skills. To this end, ELAN has proposed an approach to the teaching of writing focusing on written production to be developed at all levels of primary schooling, with varying degrees of complexity. This approach focuses on the production of statements and then texts in communicative situations meaningful to the learner.

This activity is closely linked to the reading of words, sentences, and texts. These provide an opportunity to integrate a set of resources acquired in reading (so that thematic and cultural content is internalized in both the L1 and French) and in the various language sessions (like grammar, spelling, and vocabulary).

In the early stages of learning, the approach to teaching writing involves dictation by an adult (the teacher), either individually or in a group, to allow learners to familiarize themselves with writing at their own pace. In educational situations where learners are interacting with teachers, they become aware of the specificities of writing and the process of segmenting speech into words in a context where the adult is responsible for the written form.

Guided writing is the approach adopted in early learning. This work continues with the writing of texts that allow learners to work on the textual features of different types of writing and enable them to use writing to learn, to become social actors, and also to express themselves.

- **Integrating the bilingual approach throughout the curriculum (i.e., non-language subjects)**

Student results show that their mastery of non-language subjects is linked to their language skills, particularly comprehension and production in these subjects, which is why the L1 plays such an important role as language of instruction. This is why ELAN advocates the integration of the bilingual approach beyond reading and writing into other curricular subjects such as mathematics, history and geography, and life and earth sciences. ELAN's approach consists of developing curricular content in the L1, thereby enabling the L1 to function as a complete and well-developed language of instruction. Numerous resources and teaching materials have been produced for this purpose (see Annex B). The bilingual dimension is reflected in the later teaching of these subjects in L2, which builds on the knowledge and skills already acquired through the L1. Note that it is not a question of revisiting the same concepts in another language, but of continuing to learn the subject in the L2.

3.3. Production of teaching resources and materials

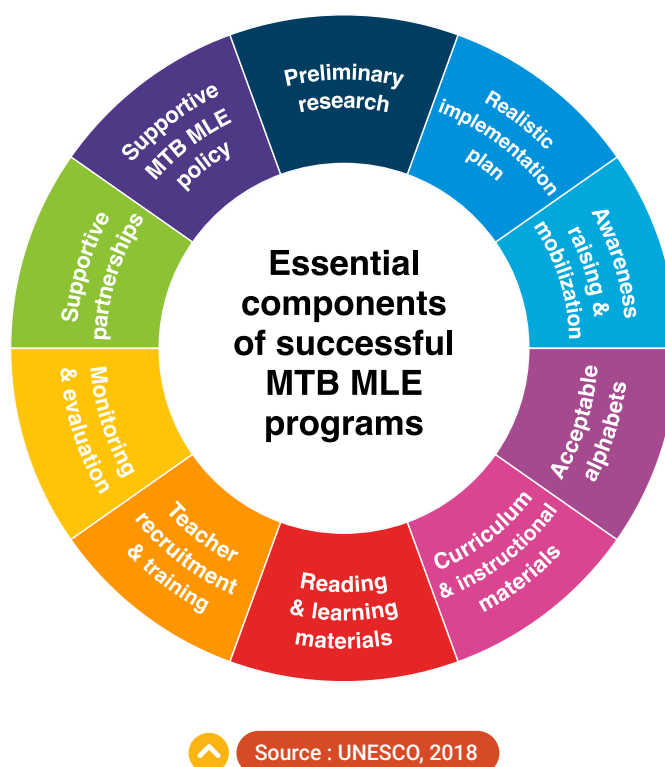
ELAN has produced numerous teaching resources and materials that put the above-mentioned teaching innovations into practice :

- ▶ Tools to guide the rewriting of school curricula according to the bilingual model;
- ▶ Numerous orientation and reference guides;
- ▶ Bilingual grammars for different African languages and French;
- ▶ Grammars from the Langues pour tous [Languages for all] collections.

Ministry of Education officials, trainers, researchers, teachers, and students are the direct beneficiaries of these resources. For a complete list of educational resources and materials, please see Annex B, which describes each of these documents and provides their respective links.

4. ELAN's system-wide actions

In her work for UNESCO, Malone (2018) lists ten essential components of successful bi- and multilingual education reform at the programmatic level. Here, we highlight ELAN's actions (2012-2025) for each of these components.



ELAN innovates on these components in two ways. While Malone (2018) recommends conducting preliminary research before implementing bilingual education reform, ELAN goes further, conducting ongoing action research to inform practices in the field. Similarly, ELAN is committed to an implementation plan that is not only realistic but also progressive in the extension and generalization of the reform. ELAN also supports the development of terminology in national languages as well as alphabets.

The ELAN innovations that go beyond Malone's components are highlighted in the titles of the following subsections.



1. Preliminary and ongoing research

- Development of sociolinguistic surveys to guide the choice of national languages based on scientific data (information such as availability of linguistic and pedagogical tools, frequency of use, community acceptance, etc.).
- **The progressive implementation of research studies on themes related to bilingualism in schools** has characterized the process of designing and implementing the ELAN initiative. ELAN has drawn on the contributions of educational research that punctuated its launch, gestation, design, and field application phases. At the outset, the project was inspired by the study

Les langues de scolarisation dans l'enseignement fondamental en Afrique subsaharienne francophone (LASCOLAF, 2010), and was later supported by the publication of a collective work (ELAN, 2014) that summarized the various issues related to bilingualism in schools and explained the corresponding operational concepts. ELAN continued by organizing conferences dealing with specific bilingual issues: the state of knowledge on bi-/multilingual teaching practices (Montpellier in 2018) and transfer (Abidjan in 2019), among other aspects. Finally, ELAN has supported and encouraged action research projects carried out by universities in partner countries, with calls for projects in 2019-2022 and 2024-2025, currently underway.

- ▶ These action research studies support bilingual reforms on a variety of topics that can inform policymakers and researchers about the institutional, pedagogical, and didactic mechanisms of bilingual education in sub-Saharan Africa. The conceptual and methodological framework developed through this research inspires ELAN's various activities and is informed by actions in the field.



2. Realistic and progressive implementation plan

- ▶ Implementation begins with the preparation of a roadmap in consultation with the country's educational stakeholders and according to national needs and depending on the human and material resources that can be mobilized.
- ▶ At each stage of the process, activities are carried out in close collaboration and coordination with national education actors, both in the production of bilingual tools and in training and field testing. This enables the transfer of skills in bilingual education and promotes the sustainability of the program.
- ▶ Implementation is based on pre-existing national systems and mechanisms for training and monitoring and evaluation, from the experimental phases to widespread implementation.
- ▶ Bi-/multilingual education is integrated into the pedagogical approach and curriculum of the country.
- ▶ Support is provided for the extension and generalization of bi-/multilingual education according to national languages (for example, Cameroon has moved from four to five national languages), geography (for example, schools in more regions), and school levels (for example, expanding to the entire primary education cycle in terms of training and the production of teaching materials).



3. Awareness-raising and mobilization

- ▶ ELAN supports advocacy of bi-/multilingual education, with the aim of fostering buy-in from various stakeholders, including civil society and parents of learners (Ilboudo, 2009). This advocacy promotes stronger contextual grounding and helps reduce misunderstandings and prejudice regarding the experimental and generalized use of national languages as languages of instruction.



4. Validation of alphabets and terminology development on a national level

- ▶ **Terminology studies** (in grammar, mathematics, etc.) have contributed to the formulation of certain scientific and technical concepts in African languages, with a specialized lexicon intended for pedagogical use of national languages as languages of instruction.



5. Teaching materials for teachers

- ▶ Numerous teaching materials have been designed. The complete list can be found in Annex B.



6. Learning materials for students

- ▶ A wide range of materials for students has been produced, including reading textbooks, reading aids (stories), and games.



7. Teacher recruitment and training

- ▶ ELAN has implemented a **comprehensive training program for bi-/multilingual teaching**. ELAN supports a range of capacity-building activities for national actors involved in the implementation of bi-/multilingual education, including the organization of cross-cutting sessions shared among partner countries, as well as the training of trainers and teachers at both the national and local levels. These activities either precede or reinforce the field-based experimentation phase; their content is adapted to national contexts and adjusted in response to challenges and needs identified on the ground. This component has also been extended to initial teacher education within dedicated institutions (bilingual modules, webinars on bilingual pedagogy, support for the revision of a bilingual curriculum, etc.).



8. Monitoring and evaluation

- ▶ The assessment of bilingual learning outcomes is an ongoing process aimed at improving existing evaluation tools that take learners' bilingual competencies into account. ELAN seeks to design tools that diagnose difficulties learners encounter across both languages and generate information to support effective bilingual remediation.



9. Partnerships for sustainability

- ▶ Anchoring the ELAN program within education systems ensures the sustainability of bi-/multilingual education.
- ▶ ELAN works to create frameworks for sharing and capitalizing on experience between partner countries and stakeholders at the national level.



10. Policy on bi-/multilingual education based on L1

- ▶ ELAN contributes to the development of language-in-education policy, including work on the status of languages, the allocation of instructional time across languages in line with the curricular progression, the selection of subjects included in national examinations, and the possible continuation of bilingual education at the secondary level. Drawing on scientific evidence, ELAN advocates for additive bilingual education covering at least the first six years of primary schooling.
- ▶ ELAN also contributes to the harmonization of different approaches with a view to expansion or scaling up when multiple models of bilingual education coexist within the same country. The objective is to prevent divergent pedagogical practices or misalignment with the national curricular framework, and to harmonize terminology and practices. This strand supports stakeholders in capitalizing on existing approaches and tools and in aligning strategies for the expansion of bi-/multilingual education within each country.



Photo : OIF/IFEF, visite d'une classe ewondo-français mise en œuvre par le programme ELAN au Cameroun, 2025.



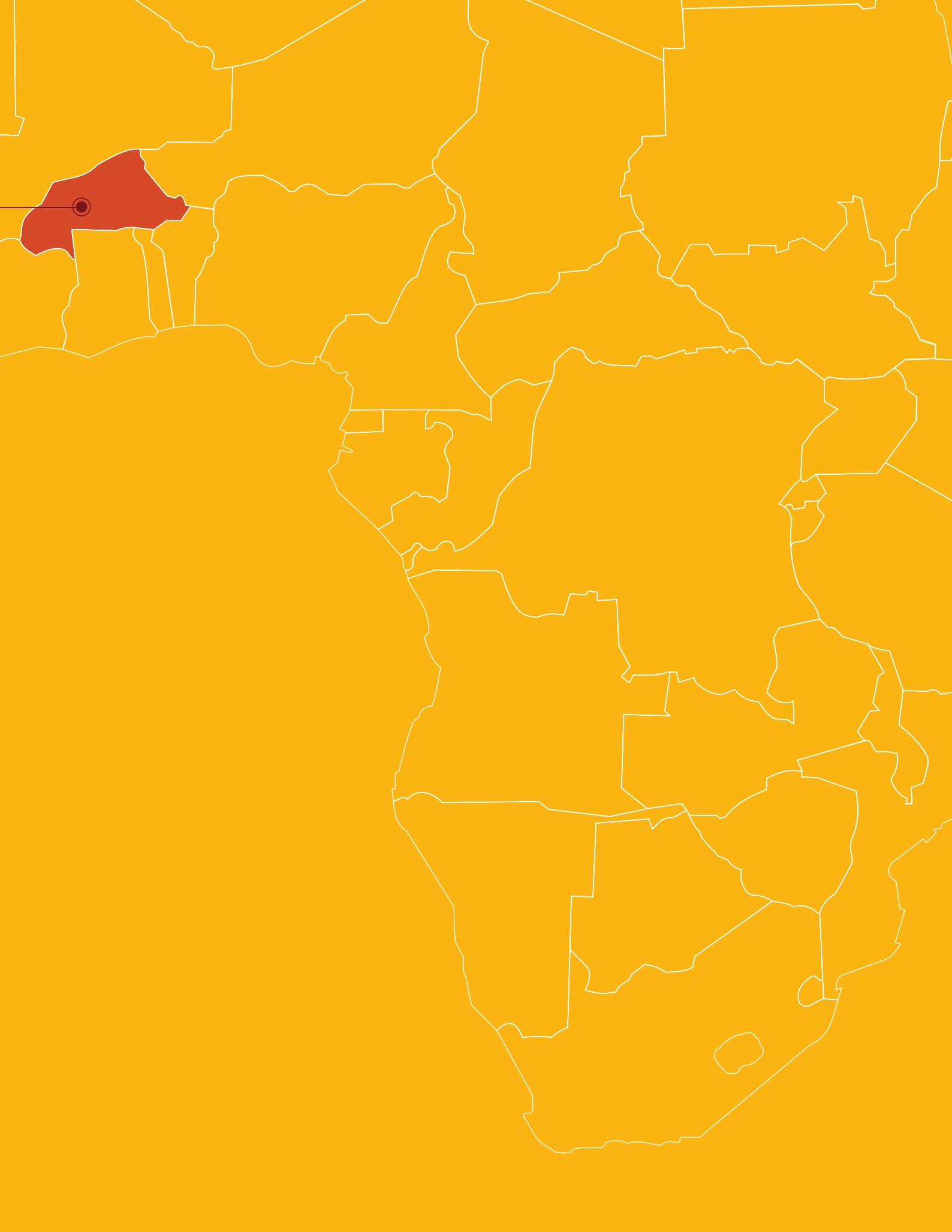
The example of **Burkina Faso**:

Until 2022, four technical and financial partners (**IFEELAN/SOLIDAR/TIN TUA/EDM**) coexisted in Burkina Faso, all working to implement bilingual education through approaches, mechanisms, and teaching materials that were both similar and diverse. In 2022, the Ministry of National Education, Literacy, and National Languages (MENALN) asked ELAN to help scale up bilingual education gradually, starting with an effort to harmonize the four approaches mentioned above. The languages involved are Bissa, Buamu, Dagara, Fulfulde, Gulimancema, Jula, Kasem, Lyélé, Moore, and Nuni.

This harmonization, based on highlighting the positive aspects of these bilingual education experiments, consisted of developing a reference framework or common foundation for national bilingual education, called the “harmonized formula.” This inclusive development process involved setting up a working group within the Burkinabe Ministry of National Education that was made up of all the ministerial offices and various stakeholders in bilingual education. Several technical workshops were held. National consultations were also held, and the final document, the result of a consensus-based effort, was endorsed and adopted by the educational authorities by decree in 2024. The “harmonized formula,” a strategic document on bilingual education, is aligned with Burkina Faso’s curricular option (the integrative approach) and its national education strategic plan. This is likely to ensure greater equity in learning, adopting a single approach for all learners across the country, and it has helped in the design of a unified model of bilingual education that aligns pedagogical methods with curriculum content.

Following this harmonization work, ELAN, in collaboration with UNESCO-IIEP (the International Institute for Educational Planning), trained officials from Burkina Faso’s Ministry of Education in planning the progressive expansion of bilingual education in schools. A financial simulation model tailored to the bilingual reform made it possible to project the institutional, pedagogical, logistical, and financial implications of scaling up, highlighting the operational and context-specific sustainability of this nationwide rollout of bilingual education.

Bilingual education as described in the national reference framework and the simulation model are currently being rolled out in the country.





The example of **Sénégal**:

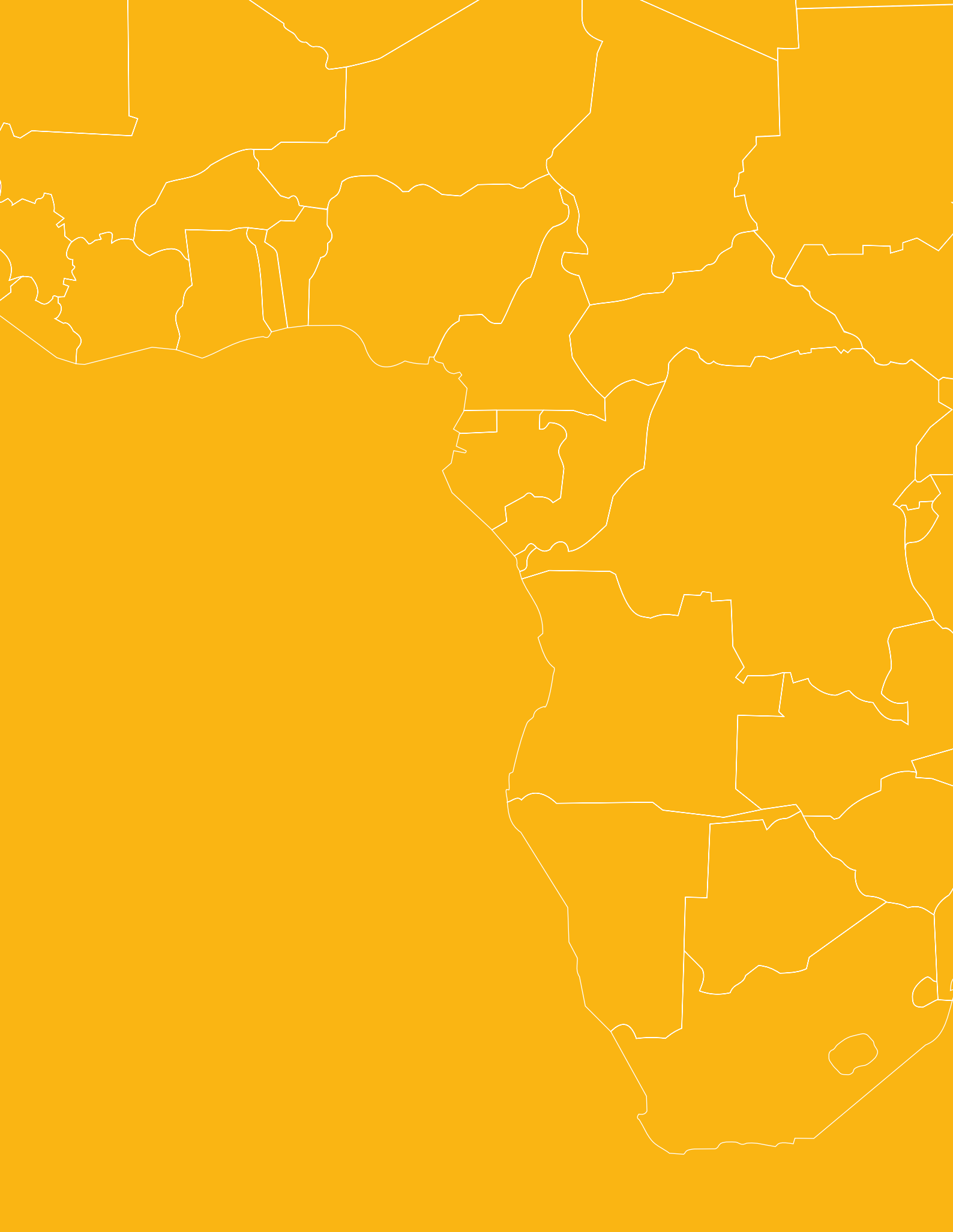
Since **2008**, numerous technical and financial partners, including local NGOs, have been involved in the field of bi-/multilingual education in six national languages (Wolof, Seereer, Pulaar, Soninke, Mandinka, Diola), notably **ELAN, ARED, ADLAS, and EMILE**.

ARED, in particular, adopted an approach similar to that of ELAN to promote interlinguistic transfer, piloting a simultaneous or concurrent bilingual approach with even more in-depth development of L1, in this case Wolof and Pulaar (see Benson, 2020). Following the success of its pilot project, ARED began advocating with the Ministry of National Education (MEN) for the scaling up of bilingual education. Following this advocacy, in which ELAN took part, the Ministry of National Education launched a process to harmonize all these approaches in order to define a national policy and model for bi-/multilingual education with a view to its gradual scaling up. The development of the Harmonized Model of Bilingual Education in Senegal (MOHEBS) was the result of a consensual process, with several consultations and national workshops involving all actors and stakeholders, including OIF-IFEF with the ELAN initiative. The final document was presented in 2019 and validated in 2021. This framework document describes a national additive-type bilingual education model (MEN, 2021). The latest update in 2024 recommends a bilingual education model with an early exit in the third and fourth years of primary school, but it also states an intention to extend the model to late-exit or even beyond, depending on the progress of this reform. It should be noted that a bilingual language-in-education policy explaining the role of national languages in schools is yet to be adopted.

As Senegal has clearly chosen to move toward multilingual education, ELAN, in agreement with the Ministry, no longer supports experimental classes and, since 2018, focuses its support on system-wide actions aimed at scaling up (such as the drafting and adoption of the MOHEBS, developing modules for initial teacher training, etc.).

The Ministry is operationalizing the MOHEBS with the support of its technical and financial partners. A nationwide scale-up plan covering all regions has been developed, with the objective of organizing the first bilingual end-of-primary education examination in 2027.

However, despite Senegal's political commitment, the implementation of bilingual education remains challenging due to a lack of financial resources. The only available funding comes from technical and financial partners that support foundational reading and mathematics programs in L1 and L2, but do not promote interlinguistic transfer. The main donor is currently the Gates Foundation, which works in partnership with ARED.





CONCLUSION

This document aimed to clarify the characteristics of ELAN and the conceptual, scientific, and methodological foundations of the bi-/multilingual education promoted by the ELAN initiative.

It shows how ELAN is fully aligned with current international knowledge and practices in bi-/multilingual education, and draws on evidence to propose a contextualized, progressive, and system-wide approach to bilingual education in Francophone countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

One of ELAN's major contributions lies in its ability to foster dialogue between research and field-based practice. ELAN proposes an innovative teaching approach centered on the valorization of learners' language skills, the structured transfer of language skills, and the full pedagogical use of first languages as languages of instruction.

By adapting its tools to the curricular and linguistic specificities of partner countries, ELAN helps to make bi-/multilingual education a lever for inclusion, equity, and academic success. The proposed teaching framework, the resources produced, and the technical support provided are part of a broader ambition: the sustainable transformation of education systems through the effective recognition of learners' languages and their cognitive and cultural potential.

At a time when many countries seek to expand or harmonize their bilingual education systems, the methodological principles developed by ELAN offer concrete and adaptable guidelines.

Finally, readers seeking further clarification on the various terminologies are invited to consult Annex A of this document.



Photo : OIF/IFEF, visite d'une classe ewondo-français mise en œuvre par le programme ELAN au Cameroun, 2025.

The table below summarizes the main guidelines of the program, its foundations, and its modalities of implementation:

Constitutive level	ELAN initiative
Recommended type of bilingualism	Additive bilingualism, focused on the simultaneous development of L1 and L2
Subjects concerned	All subjects in elementary education
Languages of instruction	National languages (L1) and French (L2), according to a progressive and contextualized approach
Methodological principles	Transfer of language skills, system-wide approach, integrated curriculum, progressive learning
Levels concerned	All levels of basic education (bilingual continuum)
Didactic approach	Explicit teaching, cognitive, linguistic, and cultural transfer scenarios
Curriculum integration	Compliance with national guidelines: framework laws, curriculum framework, teaching approaches
Objective	Improvement of learning outcomes , particularly in foundational skills, and the promotion of first languages and local cultures.

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This list includes documents:

- institutional documents on multilingual educational language policy;
- international guidance;
- strategic documents for the development and implementation of multilingual education in Africa;
- on additive bilingualism and its effects on academic achievement;
- on pedagogical foundations;
- on first language teaching and interlinguistic transfer;
- on reading and its teaching/learning;
- on monitoring and evaluation, EGRA/EGR methods and related debates;
- as well as case studies/comparative contexts.

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ANNEX A:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

(Source: Benson, 2024)

Additive approach to bi-/multilingual education	An additive approach to languages in education involves developing oral and written literacy in the learner's L1 while teaching one or more additional languages (L2s). This promotes the transfer of skills and knowledge from L1 to L2, allowing for efficient and effective literacy development and learning across the curriculum (Cummins, 2005, 2009).
Early-exit transitional approach	Early-exit programs use the L1 but gradually phase it out after two or three years and replace it with the L2. The moment of replacement, which is known as transition, causes learners difficulty because their foundational skills in the L1 are not strong enough to support transfer to the L2 (Cummins, 2009). This subtractive approach is not supported by current understandings of multilingual learning.
Emergent bilinguals or multilinguals	Learners are considered emergent bilinguals or multilinguals if they are continuing to develop their L1s orally and in writing while learning additional languages. Use of either term highlights the idea that learners bring valuable linguistic and cultural resources from home and community to the classroom (García, 2009).
Explicit pedagogy	Explicit teaching refers to a set of teacher-led approaches focused on a demonstration by the teacher followed by guided practice and independent practice (Education Endowment Foundation, 2022).
Indigenous	Indigenous peoples, communities and nations have a "historic and cultural "continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories" and consider themselves distinct from those now dominant in those territories (United Nations, 2004).
Interculturalism	Interculturalism is an element of multilingual education in which awareness is developed of one's own culture and the cultures of others. Multiculturalism involves identifying with two or more ways of knowing (Byram, 2009), while interculturalism promotes an understanding of non-dominant and dominant cultures in society.

Interlinguistic transfer	Transfer, also known as interlinguistic transfer, is the research-based principle underlying additive bilingual or multilingual education. Transfer is a cognitive process whereby the literacy and skills developed in a strong language (L1) do not have to be relearned in another language. Given time and exposure to both or all languages, learners transfer phonological awareness (sound–symbol correspondence), specific linguistic elements (vocabulary), pragmatic aspects (meaningful gestures), conceptual knowledge (photosynthesis) and metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies (for example, comparison or contrast) (Cummins, 2005).
L1 [of an individual] or mother tongue/first language	The individual's L1 is the language that a person speaks as a mother tongue or home language. Multilingual people may consider several languages as their L1s. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) defines mother tongue as language that a person (a) has learned first; (b) identifies with; (c) knows best; and/or (d) uses most. Kosonen and Benson (2013) added: (e) speaks and understands competently enough to learn academic content at the appropriate age level.
L1 [of the school]	The school L1 is the main language that a multilingual education program uses to build a foundation for literacy and learning. Ideally, it is the same as the learner's L1 or home language, but it may be somewhat different (if it is a standard variety versus the learner's local non-standard variety), quite different but familiar (if it is a widely spoken L2 in the community and/or is from the same linguistic family as the learner's L1) or completely different (if it is a state or provincial language that is not familiar to the learner).
L2 [of an individual]	The individual's L2 is a language that a person learns or acquires in addition to the home languages. The L2 may be a familiar language, like a lingua franca, that is spoken in the person's family, community or region or it may be a new or foreign language.
L2 [of the school]	The school L2 refers to an additional language that is taught explicitly in a multilingual education program that builds on transfer from the L1. The term L3 may also be used if the approach adds each language sequentially over the years. L2s are usually dominant regional, national or international languages that learners will need to access future education and job opportunities. Learners may or may not have been exposed to school L2s prior to entering school, which is why comparison and contrast with the L1 aids learning.

Metalinguistic awareness	Metalinguistic awareness is an individual's understanding of the structure and functions of languages that is particularly developed in bilinguals and multilinguals. This understanding is demonstrated by one's ability to talk about a language and how it works or to compare and contrast features of two or more languages.
Multilingual education	Multilingual education has become an umbrella term for primary education that uses two or more languages. However, L1-based multilingual education refers to the systematic use and development of learners' strongest languages to build a strong foundation for literacy skills and knowledge and promote transfer to additional languages (Kosonen and Benson, 2013; García, 2009).
Multilingualism	Multilingualism goes beyond the ability to understand and express oneself in two or more language varieties to include social and cultural aspects, like identity and intercultural awareness (Franceschini, 2011). Multilinguals have differing proficiencies in their languages depending on exposure, need, education, employment and many other variables that change throughout their lives. The concept of multilingualism can be extended to "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives" (European Commission, 2007, p. 6).
Structured pedagogy	Structured pedagogy is a teaching approach that organizes learning in a highly planned and systematic way, using clear objectives, sequenced content, guided activities, and frequent assessments.
Subtractive approach to bi-/multilingual education	A subtractive approach to languages in education involves replacing the L1 with the L2 after only a short time. This approach fails to develop L1 literacy and learning enough to promote effective transfer of skills. It is based on the incorrect idea that more L2 equals better L2 learning, while the actual result is loss of skills and fluency in the L1 and a weak foundation for learning (Cummins, 2009).

Transition

Transition refers to the moment in an early- or late-exit bilingual program when the medium of instruction switches to the L2. This term is no longer used due to extensive evidence that removing L1 time to increase L2 time does not result in better L2 learning (Cummins, 2009). Current scholarship supports the continued development of L1 skills alongside L2 learning, and the teaching and assessment of academic content in L1 and bilingually or multilingually for as long as possible in the school system to maximize successful transfer of skills.

Translanguaging

The *translanguaging* concept refers to emergent multilinguals' active and dynamic use of their languages as an integrated whole (García, 2009). The implication for pedagogy is that teaching should promote connections between languages rather than forcing learners to work in one language at a time. This is consistent with the use of comparison–contrast activities to promote interlinguistic transfer and the prioritization of comprehension and meaning-making in content instruction (Cummins, 2017; Cenoz and Gorter, 2014).

ANNEX B: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND MATERIALS PRODUCED BY ELAN

Here is a list of educational resources and materials produced by ELAN. In the electronic version, you can click on each one to view these resources.

Tools for rewriting curricula for bi-/multilingual education

The rewriting of curricula (in both languages and in other subjects), as part of an effort to transform the national curriculum into a bi-/multilingual one, is a current goal of some countries that are integrating first languages into their education systems. They include it in their Curriculum Guidelines (COC) or in their framework laws.

In response to this need, ELAN has developed two tools to assist program designers and trainers in revising learning content, thereby promoting the change from strictly monolingual programs (L1 on one side and L2 on the other) to bilingual programs that integrate the teaching and learning of a first (home) language and French.

The first tool is a **bilingual competency framework**. It is used to guide the design of programs for both languages from the outset, describing the competencies and resources involved and highlighting the progression of language learning for the entire bilingual primary school system.

The second tool is a **training module** that helps explain the process, approach, and steps involved in developing a bilingual program. It aims to develop the following skills in bilingual curriculum designers:

- ▶ Ability to analyze existing (monolingual) programs in preparation for their rewriting.
- ▶ Ability to appropriate and use operational curricular and didactic concepts that are useful for the design of bilingual programs.
- ▶ Ability to develop a bilingual student profile and break it down into skills to be achieved for each stage of the primary cycle.
- ▶ Ability to determine the relevant teaching and training objectives and content in the national language and in French from the selected skills.
- ▶ Ability to integrate teaching and learning plans and identify opportunities for language transfer.

As mentioned above, the ELAN initiative has gradually developed a range of tools to meet the needs on the ground and support the development of bilingual and multilingual curricula.

GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS (in FRENCH)

Guidance on the ELAN bilingual/multilingual approach to teaching African languages and French

This document explains the main pedagogical and didactic principles of teaching African languages as L1, and how they relate to French. The concept of transfer is developed within the framework of this multilingual methodology, along with the principles of inductive teaching using active methods and the approaches to be adopted by teachers.

Guidance on the bi-multilingual approach to reading and writing

This document explains how to introduce writing in both languages, first in reading texts and then in writing them. It highlights the importance of decoding activities, how to develop comprehension, and how to practice reading and writing skills using as many resources as possible.

Guidance on teaching mathematics in a bilingual context - primary cycle

This guide sets out the principles of teaching mathematics through two languages used in successive and complementary ways. As with language instruction, the aim is to encourage the transfer of learning from first language (L1) to second language (L2), so that lessons already covered in L1 do not need to be repeated. Instead, teaching should build on key reference points when transferring to the L2, after identifying during lesson planning what has already been acquired in L2 as a result of the lesson taught in L1, and what still remains to be learned in L2.

Bilingual teaching approaches in mathematics - primary cycle

This document accompanies the guidance handbook for teaching mathematics in bilingual contexts. It presents mathematical progressions in L1 and L2, which should be adapted to national curricula. It also provides examples of instructional scenarios in both L1 and L2.

Guidance on teaching history and geography in a bilingual context, accompanied by a bilingual student competency framework (forthcoming publication)

This pedagogical document complements existing national teaching guides and official instructions by providing guidance and directions to support the smooth implementation of the methodological approach used in the social sciences (history and geography, civic education) in a bi-/multilingual context.

Guidance on teaching life and earth sciences in a bilingual context, accompanied by a bilingual student competency framework (forthcoming publication).

This pedagogical document complements existing national teaching guides and official instructions by providing guidance and directions to support the smooth implementation of the methodological approach used in the life and earth sciences in a bi-/multilingual context.

Guidance on the transfer of linguistic competencies, accompanied by a set of country-contextualized lesson planning sheets

This guide focuses on transferring the learning of grammar from the L1 to the L2 in bilingual classrooms. It serves as a tool for primary educators and administrators in countries implementing a bi-/multilingual approach, as well as for primary teacher trainers and trainers of trainers. Its purpose is to support educators' understanding of linguistic transfer, to inform pedagogical supervision, and to guide textbook developers in integrating transfer-based approaches into the materials they design. The guide is accompanied by a contextualized set of lesson planning sheets on transfer for each country.

Guidance on the training of trainers in bilingual instruction, NL/French

This set of modules (5) defines the skills to be developed by trainers, the conceptual and methodological foundations of bilingual education, transfer and its didactic implications, the teaching of oral skills, reading and writing, and non-linguistic disciplines (NLD) from a bilingual perspective. Each module offers the trainer a set of practical activities and appropriate bibliographical references.

SOME EXAMPLES OF ORIENTATION GUIDES



REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Bilingual student competency framework in reading and writing for primary education	As a guidance tool for the implementation of a bilingual curriculum, this framework refers to a standard model that can be adapted to different national contexts.
Competency framework for teaching mathematics in a bilingual context – primary cycle.	This document presents the expected student competencies in mathematics across three sub-domains: numerical activities (arithmetic), measurement activities, and problem-solving activities.
Competency framework for teaching history and geography in a bi-/ multilingual context (forthcoming publication)	This document serves as a guidance tool for implementing a history and geography curriculum in a bilingual context, beginning in the second year of primary.
Competency framework for teaching life and earth sciences in a bilingual context - primary cycle (forthcoming publication)	This document presents the expected student outcomes in a bilingual context in life and earth sciences across key scientific domains, including ecology, plant biology, animal biology, human biology, electricity, matter, technical objects and problem-solving activities.

SOME EXAMPLES OF REFERENCE MATERIALS



TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS.

**Teachers' guides for primary grades 1-3
(language and mathematics)**

The teachers' guides accompany the student textbooks. They are designed to provide teachers with instructional guidance aligned with the principles of bilingual education and linked to the student competency framework. A standard guide exists in French and has been contextualized for all partner countries.

**Student textbooks for primary grades
1-3 (languages and mathematics)**

The student textbooks are designed to support the progression of bilingual learning. Standard French-language textbooks are developed and then contextualized in each country.

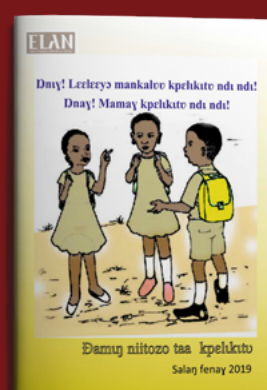
**ELAN pedagogical toolkit (currently
being revised)**

The pedagogical toolkit is a game-based teaching resource available to teachers to support the learning of literacy and mathematics in bilingual classes. It consists of several components.

Specialized glossaries

Specialized glossaries in national languages covering different subject areas (language, mathematics, and world-discovery subjects) have been developed and contextualized. They serve as resources for teachers.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PEDAGOGICAL MATERIALS



BILINGUAL GRAMMARS OR “BI-GRAMMARS”

The bilingual grammars constitute a set of tools for comparing specific (cross-border) African languages and French for use in schools. The published works serve as models for describing other languages. These bilingual works compare the grammatical structures of specific African languages and French, thereby laying the groundwork for bilingual teaching and learning promoting transfer.

Among the bilingual grammars produced by the OIF are :



Wolof-French bilingual
grammar (Senegal)



Fulfulde/Pulaar-French
bilingual grammar (Senegal)



Songhay-Zarma-French
bilingual grammar (Niger)



Lingala-French bilingual
grammar (DRC)



Mandinka-French bilingual grammar
(Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea)



Mooré-French bilingual
grammar (Burkina Faso)

These bilingual grammars aim to strengthen learners' French language skills while promoting African languages, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and culturally relevant education.



Access the IFEF library here

FURTHER RESOURCES

As an extension of the bilingual grammars, the ***Langues-pour tous*** [Languages for All] collections offer two models that can be used to describe both the L1 and French (or other languages). These models are the concrete expression of the linguistic theories that underpin the possibility of transfer.

The ***L'Essentiel*** collection describes languages based on the universal operations they perform (naming, qualification, actualization, temporalization, etc.) and produces basic grammars to accompany the early stages of schooling (<https://www.langues-pourtous.com/l-essentiel-de-la-grammaire>).

The ***Grammaires du vivre-ensemble*** [Live-together Grammars] collection allows for further exploration of the grammatical resources of language in its most advanced functions. (<https://www.langues-pourtous.com/grammaires-du-vivre-ensemble>).

These collections have received sponsorship from the IFEF-OIF, and several grammars are currently being developed: Dioula-Bamanankan, Baoulé, Wolof, and Haitian Creole are in progress. Others are to come.

As the different languages of an education system are described according to the same patterns, it is easier to identify areas of similarity and difference and to predict transfers. This will also facilitate teacher training.



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