“We are all in this together”
Ministry, School and Community Actors working Together for Improved Literacy in Cote d’Ivoire

«Integrated Support for Sustainable School Canteens and Early Grade Reading in Ivory Coast - USDA McGovern-Dole”
(2016-2020)

Improving Literacy in 613 Schools in the North and West of Ivory Coast

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Country and Project Context

Improving Literacy in 613 Schools in the North and West of Ivory Coast
Zones of intervention and beneficiaries

Rural Areas Northwest of Côte d’Ivoire: 125,000 students from 613 schools in 7 regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>DREN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAFING</td>
<td>TOUBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAGOUE</td>
<td>BOUNDIALI</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOUNKANI</td>
<td>BOUNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAVALLY</td>
<td>GUGLO</td>
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<td>GONTOUGO</td>
<td>BONDOUKOU</td>
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<tr>
<td>PORO</td>
<td>KORHOGO</td>
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<td>TCHOLOGO</td>
<td>FERKESSEDOUGOU</td>
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Context:

- Poor reading skills for elementary school students
- The maternal language is not the language of instruction
- Limited resources of local community
- Low levels of education of some parents in rural areas
- Insufficient supply of qualified and trained teachers
- Limited access to materials, equipment and textbooks for schools
- Inadequate educational infrastructure
Efforts of the MEN (Ministry of National Education) and Reforms

Encourage and support for assessments focused on the access and quality of education

Mobilizing funds to improve the access and quality of primary education

Improving Literacy

Reforms and improvements in Educational policies:
- 2014: law introducing syllabic method
- 2015: ameliorate the curriculum in primary school
- 2016: begin to introduce curriculum to teachers.
1. Capacity building of the institutions of MEN and teachers.
2. Improved access to learning tools for reading and writing
3. Supporting additional reading material through the school and community mobile libraries
Theory of Change

**OUTCOME**
More quality reading instruction, Increased attention of students

**IMPACT**
Literacy/Reading Skills of 125000 in 613 Schools of Ivory Coast is improving

**OUTPUT**
- More time spent with books;
- More parents engagement in literacy activities and follow up of their children;
- More motivation of teachers and students

Activities and strategies
- Ameliorating of curriculum;
- Baseline assessment with ASER and sharing of results;
- Development of tools to improve teaching and learning of reading;
- Distribution of tools in all schools;
- Training of MEN institutions and teachers
- Giving books and libraries to schools;
- Giving other didactic materials to schools;
- Stimulating reading activities in the schools and communities; and building capacity of local community, parents, and schools to sustain literacy activities in the future;
- Building capacity of local institutions of MEN to follow up activity
Choice of EGR Instrument & other data collection tools

ASER

- Identified the level of the individuals that participated according to their knowledge of letters, words, short sentences and long sentences
- Previous evaluations had not used ASER in Ivory Coast: new and innovative
- Identified the accurate level of skill of the beneficiaries by level while comparing it to the level expected and defined by the MEN
- To provide reliable annual estimates of the state of children’s schooling and basic learning levels for each region, class and gender
- Student assessment at schools together with household survey for more completed information

Evaluation Objective

- Provide detailed data and benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of the WFP-AVSI program
- Assess the level of improvement in student reading scores after having participated in the program for two years and four years
- Evaluate the impact of the program on participating boys and girls
Characteristics of the Schools Assessed

Some characteristics were assessed to analyze the report of student’s reading skills:

• For the schools:
  – Location of school - rural or urban
  – Presence of a library
  – Size of the school
  – Students-teacher ratio

• For the households:
  – Civil status of the student’s parent
  – Level of education of the student’s parent
  – Distance between the student’s home and school
  – Availability of books
## Results of assessment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Very few students can read at a good level;</th>
<th>Reading skills are low in all the classes assessed</th>
<th>Girls demonstrated less reading skills than boys in all classes;</th>
<th>Regional differences are significant in the percentages of students who have demonstrated reading proficiency</th>
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Despite the rare presence of books at home and the rare involvement and commitment of parents to reading, 3 out of 4 students said they liked to read if they found books.
Challenges
Challenges

Literacy and EGR Assessment
• coordination with others partners for realizing comprehensive baseline;
• Sample was limited for program needs;

Tools & Lessons Learned
• Print characters versus Cursive characters used in the tools
Successes

Literacy, Assessment and Use of Baseline Data

- Results confirm the previous evaluations (assessed by PASEC and CONFEDM) on the reading skills of students in Côte d’Ivoire
- MEN appreciated and declared the evaluation as valid
- Report used by the MEN to justify their goals and strengthen the reforms in place in the primary education sector (ex:...)
  - The syllabic method including in the curriculum and tools
  - Teaching in the mother tongue
  - Increase number of hour in school (Change of hourly load/quantum hour)

Baseline Results

- Adjust Teaching and Learning Materials; ex: print and cursive characters
- Understood better training needs of teachers
- Confirm need for mobile libraries in schools and communities and role of community focal person for libraries
The Mobile Library

School Situation before intervention:
- 566 of 613 targeted schools do not have a library
- School-based learning facilities for reading are virtually non-existent
- Lack of activities encouraging reading learning

Characteristics of mobile Library
- Box made of simple material with light shelves built to make it accessible to teachers and students and community activities
- Each mobile library has 30 books for each level; 3 libraries for each school
- The mobility of the libraries allow teachers and schools to use in different places
- Local craftsmen are invited to make and create these libraries
- Choice of books: decided by AVSI in collaboration with the MEN and schools
- Responsibility of COGES for the proper management of the libraries

Intervention:
- During school activities
- After school activities
- Wall of Fame
Other Activities with the Mobile Libraries

• Sensitization sessions on the importance of reading organized by the teachers, the MEN and the project agent
• Set up of a database to manage the book distribution and the mobile libraries
• Rotation of libraries (in the 3rd year)
• Activity to reward the champion in attendance (spent time) with the library and reading books. Each school will develop a method to display the names of the students who have improved on their reading or have been visiting the library and reading on a weekly basis
  – Each week the school displays the students at the top in attendance and practicing reading
  – At the end of the year, the champion will be rewarded
Involvement of the Community

- The COGES (Management Committee of the School Establishments) with the local community designate a community volunteer in charge of organizing community reading activities.
- The community plans activities promoting reading in defining the actions, resources and timeframes.
- The community organizes follow-up and benefits from AVSI's support.
- The volunteer is selected on a predetermined criterion by the community in collaboration with AVSI and the MEN.
- The community signs a collaboration agreement with AVSI.
- The community plans the reading activities, the resources, the actors and the implementation period.

Main Community Reading Activities:
- Free/Independent reading activities
- Partner reading activities
- Animated playback/reading activities
- Reading Contest

Note: Each community and school will establish a weekly attendance schedule for mobile libraries. AVSI will invite each community to organize meetings to locally define strategies that encourage students' access to mobile libraries.