

Mali Food for Education 3 Program

Improving school enrollment, retention and student performance

INTRODUCTION

The Mali Food For Education 3 Program is part of a five-year, \$30 million effort funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (USDA), led by Catholic Relief Services and supported by the Government of Mali.

The program has been credited with improving school enrollment and retention as well as student performance. Healthier, happier students showed significant gains in literacy in only a few months, and they were more likely to come to school than before participating in the program.

Assessments showed that more than 12,000 children saw a 60-point increase in letter recognition, and a 30-point increase in their ability to write.

OBJECTIVES

The Mali Food for Education 3 Program aims to improve literacy, health and hygiene attitudes and practices of primary school children in the regions of Mopti and Koulikoro through a combination of improved early grade literacy instruction and school nutrition activities.

KEY ACTIVITIES

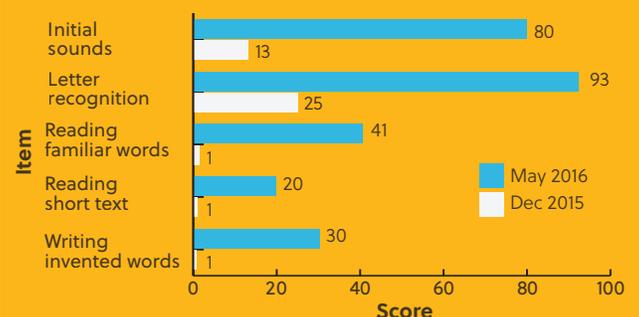
Activities include: provision of school meals, take home rations, vitamin and medication distribution, capacity building for school management, teacher training, formation of Savings and Internal Lending Community groups, and introduction of illustrated report cards.

EDC is providing early grade reading instruction in rural areas using the *Balanced Literacy Approach* (based on its *Read Right Now!* program). Participants and educators are especially pleased with the effectiveness of the interactive audio lessons, which coach teachers through high-quality literacy lessons and provide engaging and entertaining content for students.



Literacy Results

After only 5 months of program intervention, first grade students showed dramatic literacy gains in all areas tested. Familiar word reading increased by 40%, fluent reading of short text increased by 19%, and writing ability increased by 30%.





COACHING WITHIN FFE3

Coaching impacts classroom practice by providing adaptive feedback for classroom teachers. The cycle begins with classroom observation, followed by a group recap of observed strengths and weaknesses. The group acts as a critical friend and is designed to meet teachers 'where they are' in their journey to becoming better instructors.

EDC's zonal supervisors model effective coaching strategies for pedagogic advisors and school directors. Coaching emphasizes the role of pedagogical advisor as staff developer, and school director as the regular point of contact for continued teacher professional development. Coaching concludes with a concrete plan for ongoing practice, observation and support.

PARTNERS

Catholic Relief Services (lead implementer), Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), Caritas, Association Malienne pour le Développement de l'Environnement au Sahel (AMPRODE Sahel), and Guamina. The project engaged closely with Government of Mali ministries at national, regional, and district levels, and with local civil society partners.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Carrie Lewis, Project Director at clewis@edc.org.

EDC's coaching approach is designed to meet teachers 'where they are' in the journey to becoming better instructors.

