



Impact of the Education Quality Improvement Partnership Project (PAQE II)

Program Description

The PAQE II project worked to improve the quality of education for more than 69,000 children (34,665 girls and 34,436 boys) in grades 1-6 in the Koulikoro, Ségou, Sikasso, and Bamako regions of Mali from 2017 to 2021.

The project aimed to improve children's holistic learning outcomes using child-centred approaches. The program led to children's reading skills improving, their teamwork and communications skills improving, and more teachers using gender-sensitive play-based teaching methods to create positive learning environments.

Project staff trained 1,261 teachers, distributed 44,584 sets of reading materials, built seven reading centres and three classrooms, rehabilitated nine classrooms, and enrolled 23,968 children (50% girls) in school.

Context

Political instability, school strikes, and COVID-19-induced school closures severely disrupted children's learning and the education system throughout the project.

These factors are likely to have slowed the adoption of child-centered methods by teachers in project schools by interfering with our ability to provide continuous support to teachers. Despite these challenges, the project did see improvements in children's access to supportive classrooms and in their reading and life skills.

From 2022 onwards, we will empower Malian civil society partners to provide sustained and ongoing support to children and teachers that will build on these gains in future projects.

KEY RESULTS

- 1 Improved reading and communication**
Students' reading comprehension was on average 14 percentage points higher in project schools (27%) than in others (13%). 79% of children in the project showed good communication skills at the end of the project, compared to 16% at the start.
- 2 Improved teamwork**
86% of PAQE II students showed good teamwork skills at the end of the project, compared to 22% at the start.
- 3 Higher rates of positive discipline**
15% of students reported teachers using positive discipline methods instead of corporal punishment, compared to 8% in other schools.
- 4 Better learning environment**
On average, teachers in project schools used three play-based learning techniques per week, compared to an average of two used by teachers in other schools.

KEY LEARNINGS

- 1** Play-based learning techniques create positive learning environments and enhance students' appreciation of school. We will continue to use play-based methods in our programs to achieve outcomes in key areas like literacy and life skills.
- 2** Educational materials and guidance for teachers and students contribute to children's enhanced learning outcomes, even when schools close. We will increase support for underserved students by continuing to provide them with targeted guidance and learning materials.
- 3** Lack of community awareness about the right of equal access to education for girls and children with disabilities can lead to low enrolment rates. We will support underserved students by training teachers on inclusive education and raising community awareness on their right to access education.
- 4** Regular context monitoring and classroom observations allow for the project to better serve the needs of children and teachers. We will utilize context analysis and classroom observations to modify programming.



RIGHT TO PLAY
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.



Malian Experiences with PAQE II

"My child's reading level significantly improved. Unlike in past years, my child regularly reads books, and his grade average is acceptable. He took on the challenge of reading more because of the contest organized by his teacher."

– Parent of a child taught by Djémory Kanoute (pictured above), one of the teachers trained through PAQE II

'With Right To Play, we really had a lot of new techniques between students and teachers, like the "benevolent teacher, benevolent class" one. These concepts have pushed the teachers to understand early childhood better and to give up the whip in favour of consensual rules.'

– Malian Ministry of Education official

"With Right To Play, there have been a lot of improvements. Without Right To Play, the students would be a lot worse off, especially in reading and writing, and the rate of absenteeism would have increased. The children have achieved a good level of performance."

– School director, PAQE II-supported school

Over four years, the PAQE II project helped 23,968 children (50% girls) like Djemory's students to enrol in school.

In partnership with



Norad

The final evaluation of the PAQE II project was conducted by the University of Notre Dame's Pulte Institute for Global Development and Le Groupement d'Intérêts Scientifiques de Statisticiens Economistes (GISSE) in November 2021. [You can read the full report here.](#)