

ENHANCING CAREGIVER AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S READING DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

CASE STUDY 2 - LECTURE POUR TOUS

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	4
DEFINITIONS	4
BACKGROUND	5
PLANNING	6
IMPLEMENTATION	7
MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING	9
EVIDENCE	10
REFERENCES	13

TABLES

TABLE I: Program Evaluation Outcome Domains	9
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LECTURE POUR TOUS



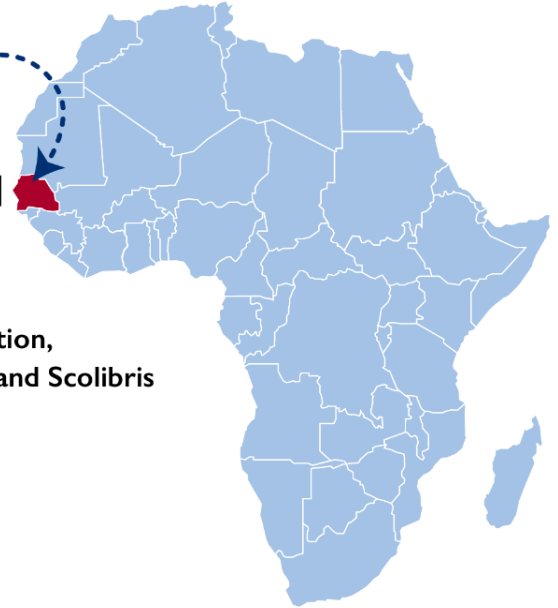
2016 – 2021



Submitters:
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INTERVENTION SPACES



Home learning environment



Community spaces



Community activities and events

INTERVENTIONS



Home learning activities



Book distributions



Literacy skill-building activities for caregivers



Reading tracker



Awareness campaigns



Reading clubs



Information sessions and communication



Technical and financial support to school management committees to plan and implement community reading activities

EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTS



Parent and community engagement activities increased student learning outcomes, based on a Lecture Pour Tous Randomized Control Trial (RCT) which used Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and a related Bayesian analysis that compared schools with parent and community engagement interventions with those that did not. All schools in the RCT received other early-grade reading interventions that were a part of the Lecture Pour Tous program (USAID, 2020a; USAID, 2022).



The community engagement interventions improved children's ability to read invented words, and it was moderately likely that they improved children's abilities to identify correct letter sounds, words in their native language, and French words by a meaningful amount. There was not the same evidence to suggest that the community engagement intervention increased advanced skills such as oral reading fluency and reading comprehension (USAID, 2020a, pp. 1-2).

ACRONYMS

EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices
LARTES-IFAN	Laboratoire de Recherche sur les Transformations Économiques et Sociales (Research Laboratory on Economic and Social Transformation)
MEN	Ministry of National Education
RCT	Randomized Control Trial
SMC	School Management Committee
SBCC	Social Behavioral Change Communication

DEFINITIONS

LITERACY—Literacy is a continuum of learning and proficiency in reading, writing, and using numbers throughout life and is part of a larger set of skills, which include digital skills, media literacy, education for sustainable development, and global citizenship as well as job-specific skills (UNESCO, 2023).

PROMISING PRACTICE—A promising practice is a method or approach that has the potential to become a best practice. A best practice has been shown, by research and experience, to produce optimal results and is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption (USAID, 2018).

READING—Reading is the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Readers can construct meaning from texts in a variety of forms. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment (PIRLS, 2021).

BACKGROUND

Lecture Pour Tous was an early-grade reading program of the Ministry of National Education in Senegal supported by USAID and led by Chemonics International from 2016 to 2021. The program's objectives were to significantly increase early grade reading outcomes and help launch national reforms for reading and the use of national languages in the early grades (USAID, 2022).

The program targeted students in Grades 1, 2, and 3 using three national languages (Pulaar, Seereer, and Wolof) through improved reading instruction in schools, system strengthening, and engaging parents and communities in six regions. This case study focuses on the parent and community engagement activities that the program implemented in 20 percent of the schools—totaling 764 school-communities¹— which included:

- A social behavioral change communication (SBCC) campaign including radio, posters, community events, and parenting sessions;
- Evidence-based information sharing between teachers and parents on a bi-weekly basis to inform the activities and support that parents provided at home;
- Community mobilizers who organized community events and facilitated parent dialogues and house visits; and
- Reading clubs and summer camps.

Many of these activities were planned and led by each school-community's school management committee. Comprising school leadership and community members, the committee worked toward improving the quality of instruction and the infrastructure of primary schools. Lecture Pour Tous provided technical support and training on relevant topics (e.g., reading, community engagement, gender) as well as grant funding to the school management committees to implement some of the program's parent and community engagement activities.

¹ School-communities are the communities where students that attend Lecture Pour Tous supported schools reside and where the Lecture Pour Tous program implemented parent and community engagement activities.



Students perform a skit illustrating the importance of parents reading with children at home, National Elementary Education Week, Kaolack, May 2019. Photo credit: Lecture Pour Tous/Chemonics International.

PLANNING

Chemonics International and its partners supported the Senegal Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale / Ministry of National Education (MEN) to plan the program in alignment with the ministry's reading and national language reform goals. This step ensured shared ownership, with the Minister officially launching the program under MEN leadership in 2017 (USAID, 2022).

Lecture Pour Tous program advisors helped design the parental and community engagement component that the program implemented in 20 percent of school-communities randomly assigned across six regions. This selection allowed for the impact evaluation conducted later. First, the program worked with the Senegalese research institute Laboratoire de Recherche sur les Transformations Économiques et Sociales/Research Laboratory on Economic and Social Transformation (LARTES-IFAN) to conduct a baseline community Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) study. The study consisted of a household survey and focus group discussions to inform the design of all the parent and community engagement activities. The program also pilot tested and refined several SBCC messages in all three national languages with parents and community members to ensure they were clear, action-oriented, and effective before implementing the campaign.

IMPLEMENTATION

The theory of change for parent and community engagement activities under Lecture Pour Tous hypothesized that improved parental and community engagement in children's reading would increase the time students spent practicing reading as well as their motivation to learn to read both in the community and at home, which would in turn result in improved reading outcomes (USAID, 2022).

In keeping with this theory of change, the program implemented the following interventions to support parent and community engagement in reading:

- **Multi-channel SBCC**

campaign: The program built on prior SBCC efforts around community engagement in reading with local language posters, radio spots/public service announcements, radio programs, local and cross-community events, and radio programs.²

- **Information sharing between teachers and parents:**

The program developed a home-school communication tool to jointly track student's reading progress using simple visuals. This allowed teachers to use student assessment data as a foundation for discussions with parents. It helped them provide parents with suggestions for specific interventions they could do with their children at home tailored to each learner's needs based on their reading level. Teachers provided these reports every two weeks, strengthening the connection between in-school reading activities and home learning activities.

- **Parent dialogues and home visits:** The program employed community mobilizers, selected by school management committees, to organize parent dialogues and home visits to train and support parents on how to support their children's reading at home. Community mobilizers used images to model positive behaviors of parental support for reading at home. Additionally, the program supported these visits with book distributions. Program advisors also worked with school management committees to create plans for directly recruiting community mobilizers to continue these activities without program support.



² The multi-channel SBCC campaign was built upon efforts from the Associates in Research and Education for Development, a Lecture Pour Tous partner.

- **Reading clubs and camps:** The program trained school management committees on activities that promote reading including reading clubs and reading camps. Community mobilizers, including caregivers, led the camps during school breaks and clubs during the academic year. In the reading clubs, facilitators grouped children by reading level. Children then practiced reading out loud to each other in addition to adult-led activities to support reading comprehension.

To increase community ownership and the sustainability of the parent and community engagement activities, the program provided technical and financial support through grants to existing school management committees. These committees were in turn responsible for integrating reading activities into their action plans, including the identification and management of community mobilizers, who played an important role in both parent and community engagement.



A teacher using Lecture Pour Tous' home-school communication tool to explain a student's progress to a parent. Photo credit: Lecture Pour Tous/Chemonics International.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

The program collected baseline, mid-line, and end-line data on student learning outcomes using the EGRA, and conducted a baseline and midline [Community KAP](#) study consisting of a household survey and focus group discussions to support the design of the program and assess the effectiveness of the SBCC (USAID, 2020b).³

A program evaluation of the 20 percent of schools that were selected for the parent and community engagement activities identified specific outcome domains that can support practitioners in developing indicators for community-based literacy projects, outlined in Table I.

TABLE I: Program Evaluation Outcome Domains - Extracted and Adapted

LEVEL	OUTCOMES	DATA SOURCE
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents participate in community activities focused on reading. • Parents have the knowledge of at-home strategies for helping children learn to read. • Parents have the confidence in their ability to help children learn to read. • The attitude parents have about roles parents can play in helping their children learn to read. • The frequency of parents listening to their child read out loud. • The frequency of parents reading with their child. 	Community KAP
Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children participate in community activities focused on reading. • Children report that their parents listen to them read at home. • Children report that their parents read to them at home. • Availability of printed materials in the home. 	EGRA/School Student Survey
Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter identification (national language) across grades and language. • Decoding or familiar word reading (national language) normalized across grades and languages. • Decoding (national language) normalized across grades and languages. • Oral reading fluency (national language) normalized across grades and languages. • Reading comprehension (national language) normalized across grades and languages. 	EGRA

³ See pp. 51-62 of the Lecture Pour Tous: Report on the Midline Survey of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on Parental and Community Engagement in Reading for the Community KAP Survey.

EVIDENCE

In partnership with USAID’s Rapid Feedback Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning mechanism with specialists from Mathematica and Results for Development, the program conducted a rigorous evaluation of the parent and community engagement activities. By pairing a randomized control trial (RCT) with qualitative data, it aimed to answer the following research question: Do parent and community engagement activities reinforce Lecture Pour Tous’ activities to improve early grade reading in primary schools?

In summary, the evaluation found that:

- The community engagement intervention reached families and changed behavior in the home around reading by a meaningful amount (with “meaningful” defined as at least an impact of 0.1 standard deviations from outcome) (USAID, 2020a).
- Teachers and parents in targeted school-communities were more likely to communicate by a meaningful amount, and there are some meaningfully positive and potentially no meaningfully negative effects on teacher practices.
- The community engagement intervention very likely improved children’s decoding skills (.22 standard deviation), as seen in the improvements on the invented word task, where the child is asked to read invented words. It is moderately likely that the intervention improved children’s abilities to identify correct letter sounds, words in their native language, and French words by a meaningful amount (.14 standard deviation). There was not evidence that the community engagement intervention increased advanced skills such as oral reading fluency and reading comprehension (USAID, 2020a, pp. 1-2).

The findings of the evaluation provide further evidence of the importance of parent and community engagement in early grade reading programs. While the program was unable to isolate causation or correlation between the specific interventions such as reading clubs and summer camps and quantitative learning outcomes, anecdotal evidence from other data and qualitative perspectives from school directors suggest they were effective.

“The results of the pre-tests this year showed a remarkable increase in Grade 1 student scores, something we haven’t seen before. This leads us to believe that activities like the student reading clubs and summer camps have truly contributed to these results.”

– School Director, Bokholl Primary School, IEF Dagana

Program staff believed that the holistic approach to parent and community engagement was essential to its success, particularly in the context of the national policy change to language of instruction for early grade reading. They found that a combination of multiple interventions, rather than a single intervention, led to better learning outcomes in the school-communities where parent and community engagement activities were implemented.

Success Story - Community mobilizers continued to volunteer after the program concluded

Many community mobilizers continued to support their communities voluntarily even after the program ended. When program staff asked one mobilizer what motivates them to continue community mobilization activities after Lecture Pour Tous, the mobilizer said:

“What we do, we do not do it for the Lecture Pour Tous program but for the good of our children and our community, because if our children succeed, we will reap the benefits. That is why we are still committed more than ever to continue these parental and community involvement activities” (USAID, 2022, p. 125).



Reading club in a school-community in Kaolack, February 2021. Photo credit: Lecture Pour Tous/Chemonics International.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The lessons learned outlined below were identified from the results and feedback from research studies, program reports, and interviews with staff.

1. **Shared ownership and vision between the MEN and program advisors, created an enabling environment for its success.** Involvement by all partners, including the Ministry, throughout the design and implementation of the program was critical in supporting the national reforms for reading and the use of national languages in the early grades. The Ministry's involvement ensured the program had access, collaboration, and cooperation at the local level.
2. **SBCC can be a powerful tool to positively influence parents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to their children's education.** This was especially important during MEN's introduction of reforms that changed the language of instruction for early grade reading. The most effective SBCC interventions use a combination of complimentary multi-channel communications. The community KAP baseline study and other design processes (e.g., testing messaging with parents and community members) informed the approach and success of the SBCC.
3. **SBCC and other community engagement activities needed to be action oriented for parents and community members.** The Lecture Pour Tous program ensured that SBCC also communicated clear, simple actions that parents and community members can take to support their children's reading - even if they themselves do not know how to read.
4. **Home visits conducted by community mobilizers were effective in supporting parents' understanding of what is expected of them to help their children at home.** Through these interactions, mobilizers also identified students who needed additional support and enrolled them in community-based reading clubs and camps.
5. **It is important to "bridge the gap" between the school and the home, especially for parent and community engagement interventions outside of school.** The program emphasized the importance of teachers and parents together using the home-school communication tool, which provided parents with simple activities to do at home according to a student's reading level based on simple student assessment data collected and shared by teachers.
6. **Collecting data on the effectiveness of parent and community engagement activities is important to inform future programming.** The Lecture Pour Tous program collected data on parent and community engagement activities through an RCT, which validated the program and contributes to the evidence that effective literacy interventions involving caregivers and community members support children's literacy.



A Grade 2 student writes on the blackboard during a reading lesson in the Kaolack region of Senegal. Lecture Pour Tous supported the Ministry of Education to improve teachers' reading instruction skills, thus helping students learn to read. Photo credit: Lecture Pour Tous/Chemonics International.

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