

Differentiation of Effect Across Systemic Literacy Programs in Rwanda, the Philippines, and Senegal

eTale 2022



This study compared three localised applications of a literacy approach for resource-lean environments (in Rwanda, Senegal, and the Philippines) and examined the factors influencing its impact in each context, considering dosage, duration, and environment.

Authors: Rachel Christina & Elena Vinogradova

Source: Christina, R. & Vinogradova, E. (2017). Differentiation of effect across systemic literacy programs in Rwanda, the Philippines, and Senegal. In A. Gove, A. Mora, & P. McCardle (Eds.), *Progress toward a literate world: Early reading interventions in low-income countries, New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 155, 51–65.

This study compared three localised applications of a literacy approach for resource-lean environments (in Rwanda, Senegal, and the Philippines) and examined the factors influencing its impact in each context, considering dosage, duration, and environment.

- All three literacy programmes (in Rwanda, Senegal, and

the Philippines) were funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

- In Rwanda, the Literacy, Language, and Learning Initiative (L3) implemented a comprehensive, bilingual, early-grade literacy programme, including literacy standards development, training for early-grade teachers, development of print and audio teaching and learning materials, support for educational leadership, and community-based activities to support literacy.
- In the Philippines, the Basa Pilipinas programme worked to strengthen the literacy component of the new primary-grades curriculum in trilingual classrooms through standards development, teacher and school leader training, materials development, and awareness campaigns.
- Senegal's Harnessing Youth Volunteers as Literacy Leaders (HYVALL) programme improved local education outcomes by training youth volunteers to mentor students at risk of failure due to low literacy and to engage families and communities in supporting reading.
- Across the three countries, low parental literacy, teacher absenteeism, lack of teaching and learning materials, and overcrowding in primary schools were constants.

Rwanda

- The adult literacy rate is 68%.
- The national language of instruction changed from French to English in 2009.

Senegal

- Overall literacy rates are between 50% and 60%, and below 40% for women.
- French is the official language of instruction, although less than 1% of the population speaks French as a first language.

The Philippines

- Literacy rates for those aged 10 years and older are 80%–90%; this is primarily reflective of decoding abilities (but not comprehension).
- The Philippines is a trilingual country (English, Filipino, and local languages)



The study

This study examined the literacy progress among students in Grades 1–3 during implementation of each of the projects in the three countries. Students were tested at baseline and at endline for the core reading skills of fluency and comprehension. Contextual and demographic data was also collected.



Findings

Rwanda

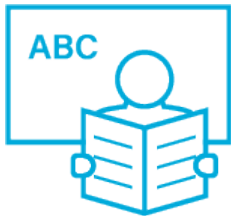
- The L3 intervention demonstrated an average effect size of 0.20 SD when scaled up at the national level.
- The effects sizes for girls were nearly double those for boys.

The Philippines

- The Basa Pilipinas intervention demonstrated an average effect size of 0.51.
- Girls improved more than boys.

Senegal

- In the HYVALL intervention group, all zero scores were eliminated at endline. The results demonstrated a dramatic advantage for children over comparison peers.
- The average effect size of difference in gain scores was 1.29.
- Girls made greater gains than boys.



Implications

- Data can make a difference. Engaging ministry personnel in the collection of and reflection on student and teacher data has helped to motivate support and engagement that have been crucial for moving programmes forward.
- More really is better. Both dosage and duration of exposure to the literacy programmes in these countries were related to increased performance and greater effect sizes.
- Methods matter. The three literacy programmes moved beyond explicit phonics and deliberately incorporated extensive oral language development, writing, and critical thinking.