



**RIGHT TO PLAY**  
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

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

### Program Description

The PAQE II project improved 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. As a result of the program, children's reading and life skills improved, enrollment of out-of-school children increased, and more teachers received training on how to use 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.

We believe these factors have slowed the adoption of child-centered methods by teachers in project schools by interfering with our ability to provide continuous monitoring and support to teachers. Despite these problems, 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 skills

Students' reading comprehension was on average 14 percentage points higher in project schools (27%) than in comparison schools (13%) at the project's end..

2

#### Improved teamwork and communication

86% of PAQE II students showed good teamwork skills at the end of the project, compared to 22% at the start. 79% showed good communication skills at the end of the project, compared to 16% at the start. This is 18% and 12% higher than students at other schools, respectively.

3

#### Changing ideas about corporal punishment

78% of students in PAQE II schools reported the use of whipping, compared to 92% in other schools.

4

#### Use of positive discipline nearly doubled

15% of students reported teachers using positive discipline methods instead of corporal punishment, compared to 8% in other schools.

5

#### Better support for girls in school

57% of teachers interviewed said they felt better-equipped to help remove obstacles girls face in school.

### KEY LEARNINGS

1

Play-based methods and positive discipline improve students' appreciation for school, but there is room to expand and improve their adoption by teachers.

2

Play-based learning improves students' learning outcomes, even when learning is affected by school closures and political instability.

3

A lack of community awareness about education rights, especially for girls and children with disabilities, reduces enrollment. Raising awareness, improving classroom support, and better tracking who is not in school can help children get into school and stay there.

4

Real-time management and support that adapts to changing circumstances is essential for change in teaching practices. The more this is disrupted, the slower change will be.



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## Malian Experiences with PAQE II

"My child's reading level significantly improved. Unlike in years past, 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 five 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.](#)