



PART 3, CHAPTER 4:

Spotlight: CRS Early Childhood Education Programs



Tadesse, S. (2021). *Catholic Relief Services framework for quality early childhood education intervention*. Education, Program Impact and Quality Assurance (PIQA), Catholic Relief Services.

Cover photo: Children learning at The Child Friendly Space Education and Protection for Syrian Refugees, Caritas Jordan, with the support from CRS. Photo by: Durand, Oscar

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Table of Contents

Part 3, Chapter 4: Spotlight - CRS Early Childhood Education Program	1
Introduction	1
CRS Spotlight: Lesotho - Whose Child Is This? IECCD Program	2
CRS Spotlight: Egypt - Play-Based Learning	7
CRS Spotlight: Cambodia Education/ECE Program	9
CRS and Learning in Action: A Community Based Approach to Successful Transition to Primary School in Rural Laos.	11
CRS Spotlight: Burkina Faso - Bisongo Community-based Preschool (Bisongo CBP)	13



The Child Friendly Spaces are part of the Education and Protection for Syrian Refugees in Jordan program by Caritas Jordan, with the support from Catholic Relief Services (CRS), 2016.

Photo by: Durand, Oscar



PART 3, CHAPTER 4:

Spotlight – CRS Early Childhood Education Program

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood care and education is an essential building block of a child's future success and it is one of CRS' priority program sectors that positively impacts the lives of vulnerable children worldwide. CRS' global ECCE goal is for all young girls and boys to be protected and valued by family and community in an environment that enables them to thrive and grow. Towards achieving this goal, CRS and partners invest in early childhood care and education (ECCE) through integrated (e.g. ECE combined with nutrition, health/WASH, protection) or standalone services, networking and advocacy, and systems strengthening in ECCE. Services are delivered through various platforms such, community-based or formal education centers, or through home visits, community-based Care Groups, support group meetings, parenting training courses, community Behavior Change and Communication (BCC) activities, and others related to institutional capacity strengthening (See Chapter 3 for more information on intervention platforms).

BOX 1

In 2019-2020, CRS' ECCE programs extended across the Mekong sub region (Cambodia, Lao PDR), Latin America (Guatemala and Honduras) and Africa (Lesotho, Egypt, , Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Cameroon, Rwanda, Nigeria and Sierra Leone). These interventions serve approximately 1.36 million children and family members to reach their full potential.

While CRS and partners' early childhood programs are numerous worldwide, the Spotlight section of this ECE Framework presents examples of ECE interventions from some of CRS' program countries — **Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Egypt, Lesotho, and Laos**. The Spotlights are meant to provide some context to the concept of ECE intervention and how CRS is addressing the ECE needs of young boys and girls from diverse backgrounds.

CRS' global ECCE goal is for all young girls and boys to be protected and valued by family and community in an environment that enables them to thrive and grow.

CRS SPOTLIGHT: LESOTHO – WHOSE CHILD IS THIS? IECCD PROGRAM

COUNTRY PROGRAM

- Catholic Relief Services – Lesotho supported by Better Way Foundation
- Project title and duration
- Whose Child Is This
 - Phase 1 – 2011 to 2015
 - Phase 2 – 2015 to 2018



ECD teachers at a training on production of play and learning materials using local resources. Photo by Nancy McNally/CRS

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

- Children ages 0 to 3 years attending day care centers and children ages 3 to 5 years attending Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centers
- Parents and teachers of participant children

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- The first years of a child's life are foundational for growth and development and can set a child on the path to success.
- Children who are well nourished and nurtured during their early years see lifelong health benefits, fare better in school and have greater earnings potential.
- In Lesotho, many at-risk children lack access to the services they need to thrive. An estimated 39% of children under age 5 who are moderately to severely undernourished exhibit delays in one or more developmental areas, and an uncounted number of children experience developmental issues due to abuse, neglect and poor parenting skills.¹

The first years of a child's life are foundational for growth and development and can set a child on the path to success.

¹ Borgen Project Report. <https://borgenproject.org/malnutrition-in-lesotho/>

PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL

All children in Lesotho, regardless of economic status, benefit from high-quality Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD) services and support.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Children in targeted communities access higher quality and inclusive IECCD services.
- Key stakeholders in Lesotho take ownership of IECCD services in targeted communities.
- Improved developmental outcomes in children provide a platform for greater advocacy and an expansion of IECCD benefits and services.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Whose Child Is This? is an IECCD program that focuses on increasing access to ECCD services and improving the quality of children's developmental outcomes in:

- Health
- Nutrition
- Protection
- Education
- Sanitation

INTERVENTION TOOLS

[Ngoana eo ke oa mang/Whose Child Is This? A Guide for Strengthening Teacher Capacity](#)

This manual provides technical information and training session ideas for teacher trainers. It is built upon the Ministry of Education and Training Curriculum while also incorporating more recent internationally recognized best practices in the field. The manual is intended to address the critical training gap faced by current ECCD preschool teachers in Lesotho. The manual has been developed in conjunction with an additional resource, the **Ngoana eo ke oa mang/Whose Child Is This Teacher Resource Guide**. The manual is electronically available at <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications/ngoana-eo-ke-oa-mang-0>

[Ngoana eo ke oa mang/Whose Child Is This? Parent and Family Caregiver Training Manual](#)

This manual includes information and practical training strategies for Early Childhood Development (ECD) service providers to better support family caregivers. It provides materials and guidance to help family caregivers improve their understanding of child development, understand their critical role in encouraging the growth and development of children and increase their skills in stimulating children's development at home. The manual is used to facilitate parent/caregiver trainings at the community level.



[Ngoana eo ke oa mang/Whose Child Is This? Lesotho Early Learning Flipbook](#)

The flipbook contains simple, child-friendly messages and strategies for parents and family caregivers that are easy to implement at home. Each message comes with a picture, explaining its importance and ways for caregivers to implement the messages at home, such as talking to and playing with the child using toys and household items; telling stories and/or reading books. The flipbook is a tool for bringing children and caregivers together in a fun and interactive way. Content from the flipbook follows that of the Parent and Family Caregiver Training Manual. The flipbook is used by field agents to conduct household visits which usually occur as a follow-up to parental trainings. The flipbook is issued to parents during trainings for further reference. The flipbook is available electronically at <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications/ngoana-eo-ke-oa-mang>.

[ASQ-3 Ages and Stages Questionnaire](#)

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) provides developmental and social-emotional screening for children between the ages of 1 and 66 months. The tool is administered by parents and caregivers such as teachers, who know the children well and interact with them regularly. However, data can also be collected by trained enumerators who can elicit information from caregivers and also use careful observation. The questionnaire has been used worldwide and is recommended as a useful tool for low-income countries. This tool was adapted for use in Lesotho by a group of key stakeholders in Early Childhood Development in 2016. A series of questionnaires is available online by searching ASQ-3.

[Planning and Conducting Well-Being Days](#)

The manual provides guidance on organizing and monitoring Child Well-Being Days. Child Well-Being Day is a one-stop shop for services that young children and their caregivers need for optimum growth. These services include nutrition, health, sanitation, child rights, and protection and education. The Child Well-Being Day manual is available electronically at <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications/planning-and-conducting-well-being-days>



Children engage with a puzzle created by their teacher as part of a training on creating play and learning materials. Nancy McNally/CRS

INPUTS/ACTIVITIES

- Teacher and parental training on child development and disability
- Support to ECD centers through classroom monitoring
- Support to ECD teachers to create play and learning materials
- Facilitate ECD center teachers' registration and attendance at the Lesotho College of Education
- ECD certificate program
- Child Well-Being Days (CWD)
- Ages and stages screening tool
- Establishment of savings-led microfinance groups
- Ensuring that data and evidence on child development outcomes exists to support IECCD investment-tracer study and ages and stages screening (ASQ-3)

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM PHASE I:

- Served over 48 rural communities
- Delivered IECCD services to 5,167 children
- Engaged 9,515 parents and caregivers in trainings and well-being days

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM PHASE II:

- Supported 34 ECD centers and 37 daycare centers
- A 27% increase in average number of participants at child well-being days
- 209 SILC groups formed in communities with ECD centers
- 109 project-supported teachers have been trained in disability-inclusive techniques and provided with additional resources

RESULTS

- In October 2016, CRS successfully hosted the first international ECD Symposium in Lesotho. The symposium resulted in the establishment of the Network of Early Childhood Development of Lesotho (NECDOL). CRS has been committed to strengthening NECDOL into an independent entity from its inception. Through CRS support, NECDOL has successfully been able to secure funding to independently support ECD programming in Lesotho.
- In 2016, CRS conducted a tracer study to assess the longer-term effects of Whose Child Is This? (WCIT) interventions. When compared to the control group, children who participated in WCIT interventions were slightly less likely to be vulnerable or at-risk in four of the five domains assessed: social competence (14.49% vs 15.52%), emotional maturity (8.71% vs 8.85%), language and cognitive development (15.55% vs 16.38%), and communication skills and general knowledge (26.86% vs 33.19%). In April 2018, at the end of the WCIT phase II project, an evaluation was conducted on project beneficiaries. The ages and stages questionnaire used to assess child development shows more children were on track meeting milestones for communication skills (85% vs. 72%), gross motor skills (84% vs. 76%), fine motor skills (69% vs. 55%), problem-solving skills (64% vs. 53%) and personal social skills (79% vs. 68%) at the end of the project evaluation compared to the midterm.



CRS staff carrying out an assessment of KG Syrian student preliteracy and prenumeracy skills in Obour district in Greater Cairo. Photo by CRS Staff.

CRS SPOTLIGHT: EGYPT – PLAY-BASED LEARNING

COUNTRY PROGRAM

- Catholic Relief Services – Egypt
- Project title and duration
- Education Assistance for Refugees and Asylum Seekers’ Children in Egypt Funded by UNICEF
- One year- has been renewed yearly since 2017
- Program participants
- Syrian and African refugee and asylum-seeking children
- Parents/caregivers of participant children

PROBLEM STATEMENT

About 10,000 refugee children have difficulties accessing quality, relevant, safe kindergarten education because the refugee community schools:

- charge tuition fees beyond the means of families.
- quality of teaching is very poor and traditional.
- lack toys, story books and educational tools.
- lack the capacity to conduct distance learning amid COVID-19 restrictions.

PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL

Children ages 3 to 6 benefit from age appropriate, relevant, high-quality, safe and inclusive educational opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

- Refugee and asylum seeker parents enroll their children ages 3 to 6 in safe and inclusive education opportunities
- Refugee and asylum seeker children ages 3 to 6 have access to improved, high-quality and relevant learning environments

INTERVENTION TOOLS

[Play-Based Learning KG Toolkit](#). The toolkit includes assessment tools and teacher training materials as well as training materials for managers and parents to support the play-based learning curriculum in Refugee Community-School Kindergartens (RCSK) for refugees. The main language used is Arabic, but most of the materials have been translated into English. These materials and tools have been developed and used over several-year interventions with our partner RCSK. Even though some schools close, the bulk remain open—allowing CRS to build on the previous year’s work.



St. Lawanga School, Abbaseya. Photo by CRS Staff.



Bashair Manart El-Yasmine School in Obour District, Greater Cairo. Photo by CRS Staff.

INPUTS/ACTIVITIES

- Distribute educational grants.
- Provide KG schools with supplies including LEGO and DUPLO, storybooks and hygiene boxes.
- Train teachers and managers on play-based learning and using LEGO, inclusion, safeguarding, first aid and hygiene, gender, planning and technology.
- Support a select group of teachers to develop interactive activities for teachers and parents and upload them on the Learning Passport (LP)¹.
- Provide parent-focused learning sessions on engaging with children and toy-making.
- Continuous follow-up and ongoing assessment.

RESULTS

- Provided 10,023 KG students with educational grants in the 2019-2020 academic year.
- Improved the physical environment of 65 refugee school KG classrooms (33 African and 32 Syrian).
- Provided 3,843 students with textbooks and storytelling books.
- Improved 300 teachers and educational personnel's teaching skills, governance capacity and ability to provide psychosocial support.
- Led edutainment activities for 1,778 KG students.
- Registered 1,682 parents on the platform (a total of 4,300 children).

¹ The Learning Passport is an "Online, Mobile and Offline Platform that enables continuous access to quality education." For more information, please refer to <https://www.learningpassport.org/>



Sok Chen, age 5, cannot speak and requires assistance with mobility, eating and personal care. His mother Kem Nov did not think he could attend preschool, but through CRS support via private funds, his school made modifications so he could attend for part of each day. Photo by Hardy, Jennifer/CRS

Cambodia Education Program

SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO ATTEND SCHOOL WHERE THEY CAN LEARN AND DEVELOP

BACKGROUND

Despite progress in primary school enrollment, the overall education quality and literacy rate remain low. In Cambodia, as of 2019, Cambodia's primary school completion rate (88.5%) also lags the regional average of 95.9%¹; only 43.5% of children aged 3-5 are enrolled in early childhood education (ECE), and only 27% of 3-to-5-year-olds are developmentally on track in literacy and numeracy.² Access to ECE is now a high government priority cited in the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals Framework 2016-2030 and The Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023.

Meanwhile, UNICEF estimates 15% of children aged 2-9 in Cambodia have impairments.³ Children living with hearing, visual, mobility, speech, and intellectual disabilities often struggle to realize their potential, as they constantly face stigma, discrimination, limited access to education, among many challenges. In rural areas, children with disabilities (CWDs) rarely go to school. Even when they do, the classrooms and instruction do not accommodate their special needs. As a result, they face increased vulnerability to poverty when they grow up.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) works with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) of Cambodia at national and local levels to strengthen systems and approaches to see all children - especially the most vulnerable and marginalized - realize their right to education. CRS Cambodia has been promoting inclusive education since 2010 and has included early childhood interventions since 2016 given the needs in the country and the developmental importance of this stage.

19,212
children have been screened for potential disabilities and integrated into inclusive classrooms with CRS's support since 2010



Rehabilitation for a child with disability through playing. Photo by Jennifer Hardy/CRS

1. The World Bank. 2019. Primary Completion Rate, Total (% Of Relevant Age Group) - Cambodia | Data.
2. UNICEF. 2020. Education - Cambodia.
3. UNICEF. 2019. Country Office Annual Report 2019: Cambodia.

KEY PROJECTS

SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES (2010-2017)

Along with the government and local partners, CRS scaled up evidence-based methodologies that reduce barriers to education for CWDs in three districts in Takeo Province and promoted stakeholder ownership for sustainable impact.

Over the course of seven years, CRS helped to develop a positive learning environment for children with disabilities in target primary schools by training teachers, government working group members, school support committee members, and parents and caregivers. All 26 target schools incorporated inclusive education activities into their Annual Operational Plans. CRS also paid for referrals to medical services for many children with disabilities. By 2017, it is estimated that 90% CWDs in the target areas attended primary school, and 80% CWDs continued secondary education in the target communities, which is significantly above the national average for all children. During this project, CRS worked with partners to develop The 9-Step Manual for Inclusive Education which was officially adopted by MoEYS in March 2015. According to the Deputy Director of Primary Education Department, the manual is “a clear guideline for implementing inclusive education at primary schools all over the country.”

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) PROJECT (2018-PRESENT)



A teacher at Botroka Primary School is showing her students a new game according to MOEYS' Toys and Games Manual supported by CRS. Photo by Pip Cree for CRS

To help families and educators utilize local and low-cost materials to construct developmental toys and games for preschool aged children, CRS worked with MoEYS to develop and publish the Toys and Games Prototypes Manual for Preschool Teachers and Parents. The games in the manual can be adapted to support children who have difficulties with seeing, hearing, concentration, self-care, communication, and fine and gross motor skills. The manual has been turned into 20 instructional videos, co-produced between CRS and

MoEYS's Special Education Department, which were launched in November 2020.

Additionally, CRS worked with MoEYS to develop Guidelines for Screening Children with Disabilities in Preschool, published in November 2019. The screening guidelines instruct school directors and teachers how to systematically identify children under six years old who have hearing, visual, motor, speech and intellectual impairments. CRS established Technical Working Groups to train the teachers, commune health staff, and caregivers on the materials.

HEALTHY KIDS PROJECT (2019-PRESENT)



Children brush their teeth at school. Photo by CRS staff/CRS

The Healthy Kids Project improves children's oral health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions at school, and conducts disability screening for all children in eight primary schools in Kampot and Takeo Provinces. In this project, CRS distributed health kits to 3,775 students, administered topical fluoride for 2,213 students, and referred 158 CWDs to medical services/surgical assistance. In addition, CRS provided training on handwashing, toothbrushing and minimum standards of school WASH for 27 educators and promoted selling health snacks to 58 stallholders. Impacts of this project include some children's learning at school significantly improving because a disability was identified through screening which was able to be supported through medical referral. Many other children have had long term health risks averted as a result of oral health screening and disability screening, good oral practices and handwashing.

LOOKING AHEAD

CRS will continue to focus on building early screening, inclusive education and developmental play skills within preschools, working with MoEYS to roll-out the methodology nationally through the instructional videos.

In the remaining four years of the Healthy Kids Project, CRS will continue to collaborate with MoEYS and partners at provincial and district level to promote oral health and WASH services.

CRS AND learning in action



A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL IN RURAL LAOS

Equity in education has been a challenge in Laos. Many students face barriers to success in school such as poverty, remote location, and language. While the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) has made great strides in national enrollment, children in Grade 1 (G1) drop-out at a rate of 10%. In some provinces, this rises to 23%. MoES attributes this to several factors: the most compelling of which is that, for a large number of students, G1 is their first exposure to a classroom environment, reading, writing¹, and even the Lao language².

Since 2012, Learning and Engaging All in Primary School (LEAPS) has served over 20 million school meals and increased student attendance by 38%. Through funding from the United States Department of Agriculture and in partnership with the MoES, LEAPS continues to improve educational access and learning of 40,000 school-aged children in 350 schools across the Savannakhet Province of Laos.

SCHOOL READINESS CAMP PILOT

In some provinces, 76% of students entering G1 have never been in a classroom or been exposed to the Lao language³, which is the official language of instruction. In fact, 52% of the population does not speak Lao, yet most teachers are Lao speakers. CRS' School Readiness Camp pilot aims to improve children's chances of success in grade 1 and decrease drop out through:

- Development of both receptive and expressive Lao language skills;
- Early exposure to a classroom-like setting; and
- Early exposure to reading, writing, and print through play-based fun activities.

The pilot ran for 6 weeks in 24 communities prior to the start of the 2018-19 academic year, reaching over 350 students. Community volunteers (CV), selected by communities based on language ability, led two-hour sessions twice a week. Camp activities were designed in a way (1) to be fun for the students and (2) to maximize cost-efficiency and potential for replication.

METHODS

Before and after the School Readiness Camp pilot, CRS tested students' knowledge in 24 intervention and 12 non-intervention communities (receiving no camps) using a simple semantic fluency tool developed in conjunction with the American Institutes for Research (AIR). The tool measures oral language abilities by asking students to look at an illustration of a Lao scene and name any Lao words they can within a minute.



The School Readiness Camp pilot is designed for young children who are about to begin grade 1. Sheshofu Sumphunpakdee/CRS



A CRS staff administering a semantic fluency test for the baseline assessment of the School Readiness Camps pilot. CRS Staff

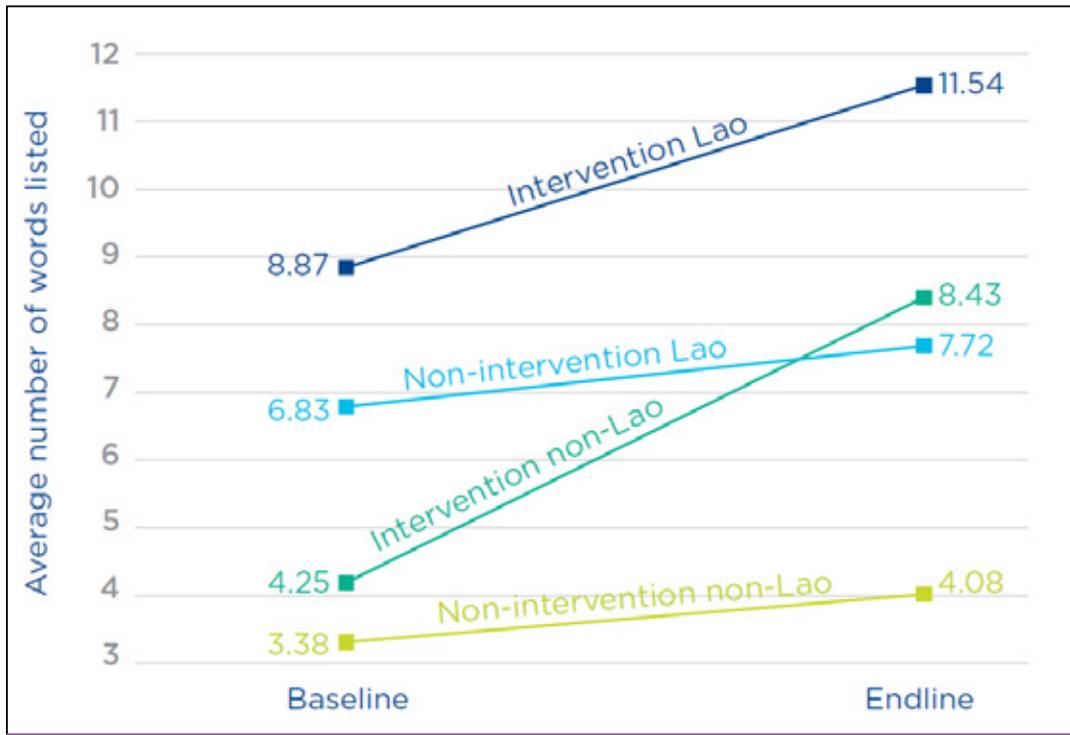
PILOT OUTCOMES

While complementary data will be collected over the course of the academic year, initial results found the following:

- The average oral vocabulary knowledge (words spoken in 1 minute) of both Lao- and non-Lao speaking camp participants from intervention schools rose by 3.22 words versus only 0.67 words in the non-intervention group.
- When disaggregated by language group, the average scores for Lao-speakers rose from 8.87 to 11.54 words; for non-Lao speakers, scores rose from 4.25 to 8.43 words.
- Among camp participants, non-Lao speakers disproportionately benefited, nearly doubling their average score.

In fact, at end-line, non-Lao speakers were performing nearly as well as Lao-speakers before the camp, suggesting that the camps may contribute to convergence in performance between language groups.

- There was no difference in benefit for girls versus boys.
- The study found that children had a positive experience with the camp, which CVs and parents attribute to the camp's fun nature and snacks provided.
- The 6-week camp cost a total of \$38 per student, assuming a maximum camp capacity of 20 students per day. While high, this calculation includes project start-up training of volunteers, and materials.



Average number of words listed verbally, by intervention and language group.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Throughout the academic year 2018-19, CRS Laos will collect data on summative assessments, attendance, and drop-out from the intervention and non-intervention communities to see if increases in students' oral language abilities translates into a decrease in G1 drop-out and improved G1 academic achievements in 24 intervention and 12 control communities.
- CRS Laos will explore scaling-up the intervention, given the increase in students' oral language abilities and the positive feedback from the CVs, parents, and students themselves.
- CRS is assessing the feasibility of modifying the format as parents, students, and CVs all recommended increasing the weekly frequency and/or session duration.
- CRS is also exploring ways to reduce program expenditures so as to be able to scale up the intervention in a more cost-effective way.

¹Lao Statistics Bureau. Lao Social Indicator Survey (MICS) 2012.

²MOES & JICA, August 2015, Draft Workshop Report- G1 repetition and drop out in Lao PDR.

³MOES & JICA, August 2015, Draft Workshop Report- G1 repetition and drop out in Lao PDR.

CRS SPOTLIGHT: BURKINA FASO - BISONGO COMMUNITY-BASED PRESCHOOL (BISONGO CBP)



Community based preschool teachers simulating IAE pre-reading activities during their training, December 2020 in Central North Region, Burkina Faso. Photo credit: KANAZOE Hamadou, Literacy & ECD Senior Project Officer, CRS.

COUNTRY PROGRAM

- Project title: McGovern-Dole 18-Beoog Biiga 3
- Duration: 2018-2022

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

- 60 Bisongo Community-based Preschools (CBP) in Bam and Sanmatenga provinces in the North-central region.
- The fourth North-central region in Burkina that provides preschool education for children ages 3-5. (Note: Some of the Bisongo CBPs were closed because of insecurity. Attacks by armed groups affected seven municipalities out of 24 covered by BB3).
- Bisongo CBPs: 1) Well-built hangar, office and warehouse; 2) Rented houses; and 3) Temporary shelters/hangars made with straw which last for five to six months duration every year—some have low walls on the four sides.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- A low preschool enrollment rate that has leveled off at less than 5% since 2004 (1.7% in 2004; 2.8% in 2007; 4% in 2014, 2.9% in 2016). In 2018–2019, the Gross Preschool Enrolment Rate (GER) at the national level remained at 5.2%.
- Formal preschool education is mostly concentrated in urban centers, with fees \$70 to \$80 USD per year for public preschools and up to \$265 USD for private preschools. Schools do not have enough space to accommodate needs.
- Regarding Bisongo CBP, there are some challenges that could be resolved with careful planning and investment. These challenges include the low academic levels of Bisongo CBP caregivers (most are volunteers from the community) affecting quality teaching; limited or nonexistent resources (equipment, pedagogical materials, etc.); lack of incentives for Bisongo caregivers, affecting motivation; and limited community engagement and support.

SOLUTIONS

- The Government of Burkina Faso has made Early Childhood Education the national priority. In March 2021, the Ministry of Education designed a National Strategy for Accelerated Development of Preschool Education to promote both formal preschool and Bisongo CBP. The education policy aims to increase the preschool access rate from 3% in 2010, 11.5% in 2015 and at least to 25% in 2021. Priority was given to the development of Bisongo Community-Based Preschools (CBP), as an alternative solution to make preschool education accessible throughout the country. CBP are found to be culturally appropriate and financially accessible for low-income parents. Therefore, a key national focus was on creating/adding preschool classrooms in all primary schools and participation of parents in ECE.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Promote early childhood development and school literacy preparedness (ages 3–6)
- Foster education for girls and ensure child protection
- Support the government’s efforts to expand ECD services (5% access rate in Burkina Faso)
- Raise community awareness about the importance of ECD

THE BISONGO CBP INTERVENTION ON ECD ACTIVITIES

1. BEFORE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The activities are implemented in three types of Bisongo CBP: 1) Well-built hangar, office and warehouse; 2) Rented houses; 3) Temporary shelters/hangars made with straw which last for five to six months every year—some have low walls on the four sides.

The main intervention strategies include capacity building, blended remote learning (in-person and radio/TV in local language), community and education sector

engagement, preschool literacy material supplies, monitoring and supervision. Activities include:

- CBP caregivers' training: Three-week training on stimulation activities and annual refresher training
- Monthly teaching community meeting: CBP caregivers are organized in four to five learning groups, with a monthly meeting with a peer-supervisor overseeing the meeting
- Internship stage: Temporary placement of some CBP caregivers in formal preschools for a five-day internship to build interns' confidence and proficiency in managing CBPs
- Project school feeding program with three providers: 1) Parent contributions to the canteen; 2) CRS technical support, supervision; and 3) government/municipalities
- Preschool supplies: ECCE materials—indoor and outdoor toys, books and games; cooking materials; and parents training to make toys themselves

2. AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Remote training focused on preliteracy using ministry of education (MENAPLN) radio-based instruction materials and local radio broadcasting (Interactive Audio Education/IAE) through a one-hour training per week, and supportive in-service training monitoring by peer supervisors. The Interactive Audio Education (IAE) training program for community-based preschool caregivers translated the content of the teaching subjects into local languages. The IAE uses radio to teach students, with their caregivers as facilitators.
- Remote training for Bisongo CBP caregivers focused on preliteracy with in-service training monitoring
- Monthly community meeting with COVID protocol
- Monitoring of caregivers' teaching
- Parental education for children ages 3–6 through radio broadcasts with a five-day, in-person training to initiate caregivers to the process of using IAE
- Training of primary grades 1, 2 and 3 teachers in literacy, health and nutrition, and IAE





Community based preschool teachers at the end of IAE pre-reading training, December 2020 in the Central North Region, Burkina Faso. On the right side wearing medical mask is the Director of Burkina Faso Pre-schools. Photo credit: KANAZOE Hamadou, Literacy & ECD Senior Project Officer, CRS.

THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC IMPACT ON BB3 ECD ACTIVITIES

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the internship program that places some Bisongo CBP caregivers in formal preschools has been suspended. At the preschool level, CBP caregivers training is done with partial in-person training and remote training. This shift, and reducing the number of participants and the in-person training time from 21 days to only five days, reduces the chance of COVID-19 contamination. In addition, compared to the 21-day training, using the IAE program was less intensive. The participants supported the less intensive schedule; therefore, it will be extended throughout the school year.

BEYOND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The use of the Interactive Audio Education (IAE) program, which is used in local languages, will help improve motivation and the quality of stimulation activities. At the primary school level (e.g., grade 1), the use of TV/radio age-appropriate instruction is an entirely new pedagogical support for our students. Before COVID-19, students learned by interacting directly with teachers. The program gives children the flexibility to engage in a learning activity/course as much as they can, according to their availability. It is also an opportunity to motivate parents to engage in their children's education; therefore, the project integrates parental education and sensitization about the benefits and uses of IAE.



Rene, Romain and Freddy read from an activity book after a literacy class as part of the CRS Budikadidi project in the village of Nyandu Malolu, Miabi, Kasai Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019. Dozens of men, women and children are learning to read as literacy was prioritized by the community as part of their action plan. Photo: Phelps, Sam





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