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## IMPROVING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is working to better educate the children and young people of Senegal and strengthen the education system. USAID also continues to support the Government of Senegal's efforts to ensure that marginalized children and youth in conflict and mining areas of southern Senegal have equitable access to education and training opportunities.

Despite progress in increasing educational access for many of Senegal's children, there are still significant challenges in offering a quality education. National data sets since 2010 have shown that most children in the first three grades of school are not learning to read at grade level. Failing to learn to read is known to be a driver of low academic achievement as well as the decision to leave school. In the conflict affected regions of southern Senegal, children's access to, and retention in, lower secondary education is very low. Low quality and inequitable service delivery have left youth lacking in opportunity and essential life skills. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, USAID is empowering the children of Senegal with the foundational skills they will need to later participate in the country's political and economic systems.

### IMPROVING EARLY GRADE READING PERFORMANCE

USAID supports the National Reading Program of the Ministry of Education (MoE), which aims to strengthen students' basic reading skills from the earliest years of learning. USAID activities are improving reading performance in more than 4,000 schools by improving reading instruction, building capacity, improving systems, and increasing the engagement of parents and communities to help nearly half a million primary school students learn to read. A major innovation of the program is its focus on teaching children to read and write in one of the three national languages - Wolof,

Pulaar or Serer - that they know and understand. In some areas, activities create physical spaces for reading, including libraries and computer rooms. The program is implemented in seven target regions: Diourbel, Kaffrine, Kaolack, Louga, Matam, and Fatick, with direct government support to replicate the program in Saint-Louis.

## **INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATION**

USAID is also working with MoE to improve access to education for some of Senegal's most vulnerable young people. USAID and MoE partnered on a national study to better understand barriers to children attending, and staying in, school. The study informed a current activity focused on equitable access to, and retention of, young people in lower secondary education in the southern regions of Senegal, which have suffered from mining activity and past conflict. The activity will ensure that more children aged 9-16 have equitable access to basic education opportunities that develop essential life skills, through both formal and complementary education.

## **SUPPORTING LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

USAID is collaborating with the private sector to enhance leadership training and connect young African leaders between the ages of 18-35 with each other and the world. This partnership has resulted in the establishment of a Dakar-based Regional Leadership Center for Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), one of four such centers on the continent. The center focuses on developing a network of leaders in public management, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement across francophone Africa.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS SNAPSHOT (2018):**

- Nearly 60,000 primary level students were involved in early grade reading programs
- More than 2,500 teachers, education administrators, and officials completed professional development activities, including coaching and training
- 100,000 textbooks, story books, alphabet charts and other materials were prepared for students, teachers, inspectors and parents
- More than 180 parent-teacher associations or community governance groups were supported

## **BUDGET (FY2018): \$19,685,000**

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