GUINEA-BISSAU McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Project

Midterm Evaluation

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MeREECE Midterm Evaluation Report

Program: McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition
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Implemented by: Catholic Relief Services – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (CRS)

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Term
CRS	Catholic Relief Services – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FFPr	Food for Progress
FY	Fiscal Year
IHfRA	Innovative Hub for Research in Africa
KII	Key Informant Interview
MeREECE	Promotion of Educational and Economic Performance in Educative Communities in Guinea-Bissau *Melhoria do Rendimento Escolar e Económico das Comunidades Educativas na Guiné-Bissau*
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoE	Ministry of Education
SOW	Statement of Work
SO	Strategic Objective
STS	School-to-School International
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

Project Background and Purpose

Guinea-Bissau is a small West African coastal nation situated between Senegal and Guinea and extending north to the Sahel. It is one of the world's poorest countries, ranked on the 2020 United Nations Human Development Index at 175 out of 189 countries and with over 70 percent of the population living below the poverty line.[1] Portuguese is the official language of Guinea-Bissau, but it is estimated that less than one-fifth of the population speaks Portuguese.[2] Approximately 60 percent of the population over the age of 15 can read and write.[3]

In 2019, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Guinea-Bissau a $17 million, four-year project under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program. The MeREECE project—Promotion of Educational and Economic Performance in Educative Communities, or *Melhoria do Rendimento Escolar e Economico das Comunidades Educativas* (MeREECE)—runs from September 23, 2019, to August 31, 2024. This initial target number of schools for this project was 321, but now 350 schools are enrolled in the regions of Bafata, Cacheu, Gabu, Quinara, and Oio. Currently, the project implementation is in year four out of five and concluding its midterm evaluation.

Over the project's four-year implementation period, CRS used donated commodities and funds provided by the Foreign Agricultural Service to implement a school feeding project. The project is focusing on achieving the following objectives:

- Improve teachers' and school administrators' ability to deliver quality literacy instruction through training and recognizing teacher performance.
- Improve the Ministry of Education's (MoE's) capacity to monitor and support teachers' technical development through capacity strengthening training and joint monitoring visits.
- Increase learner attentiveness and attendance by reducing child hunger through nutritious school meals.
- Improve learner attendance by establishing child-friendly school environments, school libraries, and extracurricular learning opportunities and by providing take-home rations.
- Increase parents' and communities' involvement in education outcomes for their children.
- Increase knowledge and improve health, nutrition, and dietary practices of teachers, learners, and parents.

CRS is working with technical partners—Plan International and Caritas Guinea-Bissau—that have extensive experience in education and health sector in Guinea-Bissau. CRS aims to reach a total of 199,539 direct beneficiaries.

[1] https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/07/people-share-priorities-first-ever-review-guinea-bissaus-sustainable-development
[2] https://pollylingu.al/pt/en/regions/55
[3] https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/guinea-bissau/

Evaluation Questions, Design, Methods, and Limitations

The MeREECE evaluation process involves three phases: a baseline, midterm, and final evaluation. This report summarizes the methodology and findings of the midterm evaluation. The midterm's main objective is to assess and report changes made in the five target regions since the start of MeREECE interventions. The results obtained from this evaluation will serve as a point of comparison for the baseline and final evaluations.

The midterm evaluation assessed progress in the implementation of project activities and overall performance using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact of the Development Assistance Committee, to identify the first indications of the impact of the project. Additional data was collected through questionnaires and observations to triangulate data and provide more in-depth information to address the questions described below:

Relevance	1. To what extent do the project's interventions meet the educational, socio-economic, cultural, and political needs of beneficiaries? 2. To what extent are project interventions aligned with the education strategy outlined in the Guinea-Bissau Education Sector Plan (2017-2025) 3. Are stakeholders satisfied with their participation in the project? Why or why not?
Effectiveness	4. To what extent has the project achieved its goals and targets (including increasing enrollment, retaining girls, reducing dropouts, reducing hunger in schools, improving teacher and student attendance)? 5. Which interventions contributed most significantly to the expected results or objectives? 6. To what extent does the project coordinate and collaborate with other stakeholders?
Efficiency	7. To what extent have project resources (inputs) achieved the results achieved? 8. Can the same results be achieved with fewer resources or alternative approaches?
Sustainability	9. What progress has been made to reach the sustainability milestones presented in the graduation and sustainability plan document? 10. Is there evidence of community capacity to take ownership of project activities and are they meeting their commitments outlined in their MOUs (providing wood, cooks, complementary foods for meals, staple foods for 2-4 days coverage per month, etc.)? Are there any spontaneous actions that APEs/COGES have taken to maintain/improve school infrastructures?
Impact	11. What were the expected and unintended positive and negative effects of the intervention on children, communities and institutions? How does the intervention affect the well-being of different groups of stakeholders, including the most vulnerable and at-risk children? 12. What do beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the project perceive as the effects of the intervention on themselves?

CRS explored evaluation approaches used in similar programs and identified the most rigorous evaluation plan possible—subject to time, quality, resources, and country context constraints. For ethical reasons, a randomized experimental approach is inappropriate to apply to primary schools in Guinea-Bissau, given that school-age children throughout the country require food assistance. For logistical reasons, an experimental or quasi-experimental approach is also not feasible given the country context in which multiple actors (UNICEF, World Bank, WFP, etc.) are implementing education assistance projects throughout all regions of Guinea-Bissau. Therefore, CRS decided that a non-experimental performance evaluation is the most feasible and appropriate approach. CRS then subcontracted the assessment to an external evaluation team, School-to-School International (STS). STS utilized a two-stage cluster sampling approach to select schools and school-based respondents randomly in the five MeREECE intervention regions of Bafata, Cacheu, Gabu, Quinara, and Oio. In the first stage, schools were selected at random, proportionally to the population of schools by region. In the second stage, enumerators selected learners at random within each school. To achieve the necessary sample size for statistically significant findings, STS included 90 schools in the midterm sample with a target of 20 learners per school.[4]

At each sampled school, enumerators administered one survey to the school director, completed one school observation, and conducted one observation of a Grade 2 classroom. Additionally, enumerators administered a midterm Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) to 20 learners in Grade 3 to measure their core reading skills. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the baseline data collection and evaluation was postponed from the end of the 2019-20 academic year to the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year. Under the new timeline, students were assessed at the start of Grade 3 rather than at the end of Grade 2. These Grade 3 students serve as a proxy for end-of-Grade 2 students as their exposure to Grade 3 instruction was minimal at the time of the evaluation. In order to collect comparable data, the same approach was followed at midterm.

After completing a five-day training, 27 enumerators collected data from January 30 – February 10, 2023, and three replacement schools were completed by February 23.[5] Each enumerator team visited one or two schools per day. STS maintained detailed documentation of all issues encountered during data collection in a tracker, which was used as part of the data cleaning process. Additionally, enumerators' use of electronic data capture via tablets contributed to data quality, consistency, and collection efficiency by streamlining fieldwork as well as reducing measurement and data entry errors.

STS cleaned and prepared for analysis the quantitative data collected through the EGRA, surveys, and observation tools. Cleaning was completed using R and Stata statistical packages and included a comprehensive outlier analysis of quantitative results to establish data consistency.

As at baseline, the qualitative data component at midterm was reduced to minimize enumerator contact with respondents due to COVID-19 concerns. The evaluator determined with CRS that a remote interview with one respondent and an online open-ended survey with six respondents would be utilized to collect qualitative data. The remote KII with USDA staff. This KII was used to gain regional perspective and broaden the recommendations by putting the project in perspective with like projects. Further, additional

[4] McConnell and Vera-Hernandez (2015) was used to calculate sample sizes for a binary outcome, with the standard 80 percent and 5percent significance level, an ICC of 0.22, and a minimum sample size of 1,800 learners for the beneficiary group in 90 target schools (twenty learners per).

[5] Enumerators could not access EBU Bartolomeu, EBU de Timate, or Indira Ghandy. Instead, they visited EB de Mato Dingal, Ensino Basico Djita 2, and Nhoma.

qualitative data was collected from six key MeREECE project staff through an online, open-ended survey after the quantitative data had been collected. These short form questionnaires focused on projects interventions, strategies, and recommendations. At endline, the evaluator will determine with CRS the scope of the qualitative component to gather data from implementing partners, USDA, local authorities and community groups.

Secondary project monitoring data was provided by CRS and incorporated into this report. This includes initial and final enrollment totals for students, teachers, and school directors.

The following limitations should be considered when reviewing the findings of the MeREECE midterm:

- **Language of the EGRA tool.** The instructions for the EGRA were in Portuguese. Based on the learner survey results, it is likely that many learners struggle with understanding Portuguese, so learners may not have understood instructions for individual subtasks.
- **Inherent bias in sampling children present on the day of assessment.** Learners' EGRA results may be biased towards the types of learners who attend school regularly and may exclude those learners who are enrolled but do not attend regularly.
- **Reduced sample size.** The target learner sample was 1,800 learners. At midterm, 1,655 observations were collected. After data cleaning, only 1,642 learners are included in the analysis. The difference between the target sample of 1,800 and the final total of 1,642 was due to some of the sampled schools having less than 20 learners available at school the day of interviews.

Findings and Conclusions

To view the updated indicator performance tracking table (IPTT), please see Annex 8.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE:

The first Strategic Objective of the MeREECE project is the improved literacy of school-aged children in the Cacheu, Oio, Bafata, Gabu and Quinara regions. Achievement of this SO is measured through the percentage of learners who, at the end of second grade, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text (McGovern-Dole Indicator #1). For this evaluation, the EGRA was conducted in Portuguese.

The specified threshold used in this analysis is that a learner can correctly answer at least four of the five reading comprehension questions correctly. Midterm values for this indicator were captured by administering the EGRA tool to boys and girls at the mid-point of Grade 3. At baseline, the proportion of learners who met this threshold is 0.67 percent, or 11 out of 1,649 learners. This increase at midterm to 0.91 percent (weighted) or 21 out of 1,642 learners.[6] This is well below the project target of 55 percent by the end of year four.

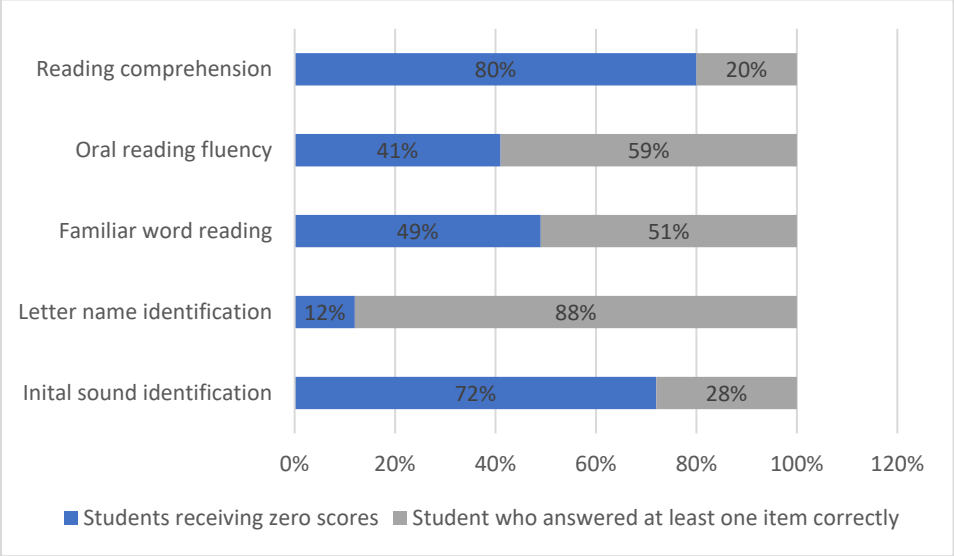
INDICATOR 1: IMPROVED QUALITY OF LITERACY INSTRUCTION (IR 1.1)

On average at midterm, mean scores increased significantly on all subtasks. Learners correctly responded to 0.78 out of five items on the initial sound identification subtask. On the letter name identification subtask, learners identified 26.47 letters within two minutes, on average. On the familiar word reading and nonword reading subtasks, learners averaged 4.65 correct per minute. On the oral reading fluency subtask, learners averaged a reading rate of 9.92 words per minute but failed to answer a single comprehension question about the passage correctly—the average number of correctly answered questions on the reading comprehension subtask was 0.33.

Despite these increases, ***two-thirds of learners are unable to answer a single question correctly on four out of the five subtasks.*** The proportion of learners who did not provide a single correct response on each subtask—known as zero scores—was often high. The largest proportion of learners received zero scores on the initial sound identification (77 percent) and reading comprehension (82 percent) subtasks. Most learners participated in the letter name identification subtask—only eight percent received zero scores.

[6] This is a significant increase as measured by the Pearson Chi Squared test (p=.003)

Figure 1. Proportion of Learners Receiving Zero Scores



Across all subtasks, boys had a lower proportion of zero scores than girls. Additionally, boys had statistically significantly higher mean scores than girls on four of the six subtasks. On two of the subtasks—initial sound identification and reading comprehension—the average performance did not differ by gender.

Significant differences in comparison to baseline:

- Zero scores significantly improved for initial sounds identification across girls and boys.
- Familiar word zero scores statistically improved for girls.
- Significantly more girls and boys received zero scores for letter name identification at midterm than at baseline.
- Zero scores on reading comprehension and oral reading fluency observationally improved, but not enough to reach the threshold of statistical significance.

LITERACY SKILLS AND PORUTGESE LANGUAGE EXPOSURE

Learners with greater exposure Portuguese in and out of the classroom have significantly higher literacy scores. At midterm, we find that Oral Reading Fluency scores significantly increase as the score on the Portuguese Language exposure composite increases (i.e. their exposure to Portuguese increases).[7] There is no statistical difference between the average Portuguese language exposure score of boys and girls at midterm. Lastly, learners at midterm had significantly higher scores on this composite (average = 1.93) than at baseline (average = 1.77).

INDICATOR 2: IMPROVED LEARNER ATTENDANCE (IR 1.3)

School attendance rates stayed the same at midterm. There are no significant differences between the attendance rates of boys and girls. At baseline, 63 percent of boys were enrolled and attending, and 37 percent were enrolled and absent. In comparison, 62 percent of girls were enrolled and attending, and 38

[7] Significance test based on weighted regression (p<.001).

percent were enrolled and absent. There are two likely explanations for the low attendance rate. The first is that evaluations were conducted primarily in the morning making it possible that learners were still enroute to schools. The second is that enrollment numbers are commonly inflated, and this is decreasing the learner attendance rate.

Figure 2. Learner Attendance Rate

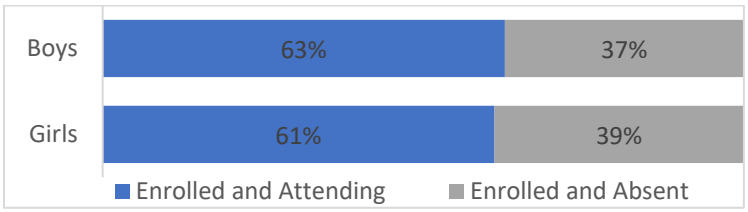
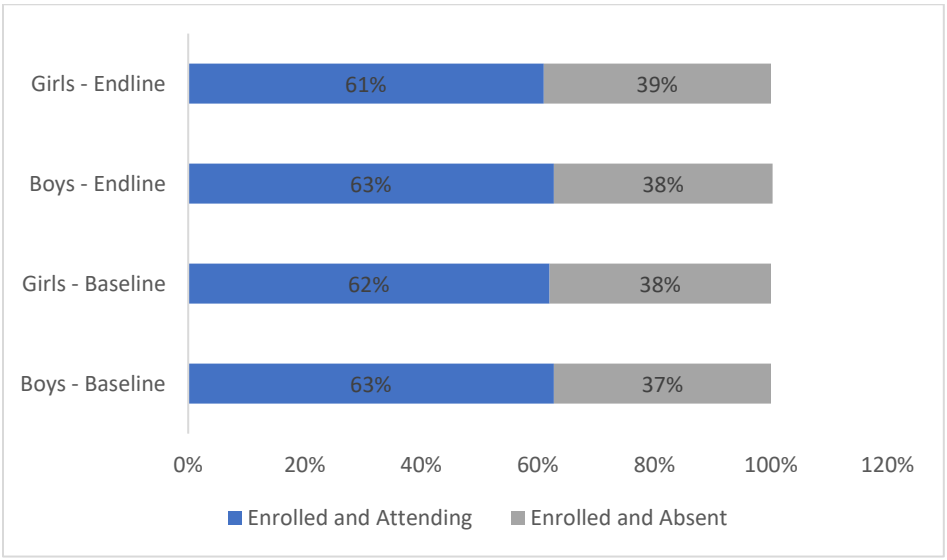


Figure 3. Learner Attendance Rate



INDICATOR 3: MORE CONSISTENT TEACHER ATTENDANCE (SUB-IR 1.1.1)

Teacher attendance rates increased at midterm among sampled schools. At midterm, 63.60 percent of men teachers were present, and 63.45 percent of women teachers were present. The attendance rate between men and women teachers was not statistically significant. At baseline, 400 of 806 employed (49.63 percent) teachers were present. Overall, 54.42 percent of women teachers and 47.88 percent for men teachers were present on the day their school was interviewed.

Teacher attendance rates increased at midterm among sampled schools. At midterm, 63.60 percent of men teachers were present, compared to 48 percent of men teachers who were present at baseline. In comparison, 63.45 percent of women teachers were present at midterm data collection, compared to 45 percent of women teachers at baseline. The difference in attendances rate between men and women teachers at midterm was not statistically significant.

Figure 4. Teacher Attendance Rate

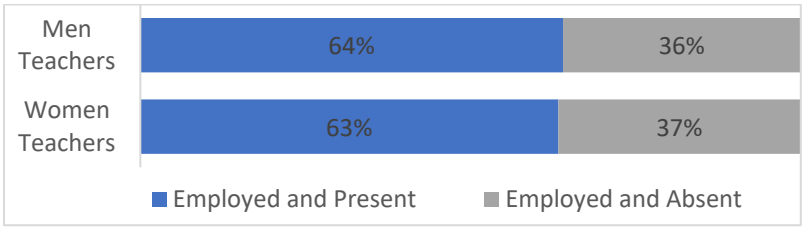
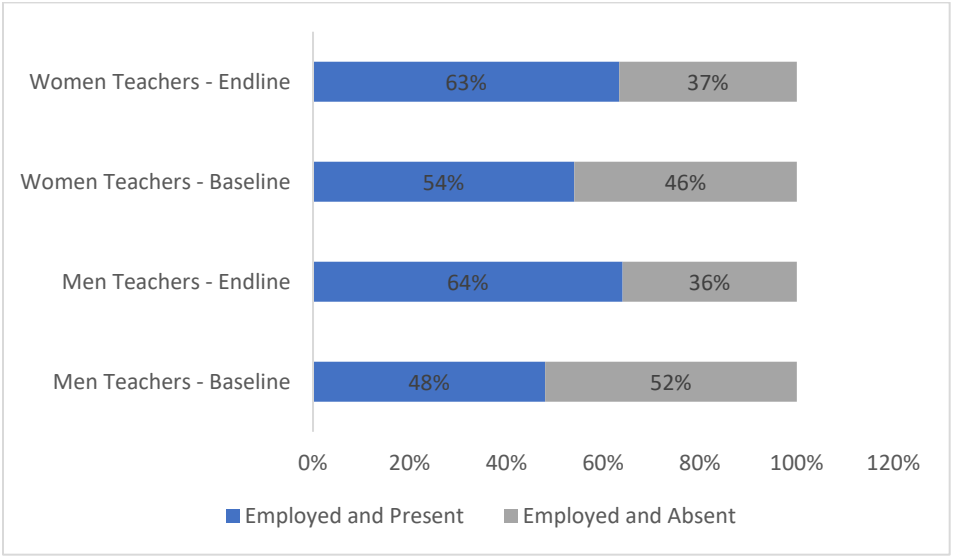


Figure 5. Teacher Attendance Rate



INDICATOR 4: INCREASED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHERS (SUB-IR 1.1.4)

At midterm, 87 classroom teachers were observed to gain an understanding of their knowledge of good instructional practices and teaching techniques. Enumerators were asked to observe classrooms looking for 12 specific teaching behaviors. Composite scores were then created, with each activity receiving up to one point per teaching behavior based on the quality and time spent utilizing the behavior.[8] Most teachers (95.37 percent) demonstrated between one and six of the teaching behaviors while 4.45 percent of teachers demonstrated more than six of the teaching behaviors.

[8] The classroom observations observed both math and literacy activities. In cases where an item was skipped, the item score was treated as zero. Each question was equally weighted. This means that all activities were given a possible score of 1. While some items were treated as a binary yes or no, a number of questions used ordinal response items, asking the enumerator to rate the quality of an activity. In this case each question received a total possible score of 1, with each rating incrementally increasing in value from 0 (e.g., 1-4 will be transferred to .25, .5, .75, 1 respectively).

INDICATOR 5: INCREASED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS (SUB-IR 1.1.5)

At midterm, skills and knowledge composite scores among school directors decreased. At baseline, one-quarter (25 percent) of School Directors demonstrated between one and four techniques and tools while 75 percent of School Directors demonstrated more than four of the techniques or tools. We note a significant decrease at midterm, 67.77 percent of school directors demonstrated one to four activities and the remaining 32.22 percent only demonstrated five.[9]

INDICATOR 6: REDUCED HEALTH-RELATED ABSENCES (SUB-IR 1.3.2)

Rates of health-related absences remain similar at midterm as it was at baseline. At midterm, the average number of health-related absences from the previous two weeks remained relatively unchanged at 3.58. At baseline, it was 3.65.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO

DIETARY PRACTICES

Learners at midterm are rarely stating that they are hungry. More than 75 percent of learners report that they in the last five days they were rarely hungry. At midterm, 81.72 percent of girls and 78.92 percent of boys said that in the last five days while at school, they were rarely hungry at school. Further internal project data reports that confirmed that food was served at each school on the day of the evaluation.[10] Lastly, three out of four learners stated they ate at least two different food groups the day before. This question was not asked at baseline.

WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

Latrines	There appears equal and reliable access to latrines for both boys and girls. Importantly, more than 65 percent of girls and boys state that latrines are accessible for **both** youngest and students with disabilities.[11] More than two-thirds of the latrines observed on the day of school visits were pit latrines or buckets (67.78 percent) and of the 86 schools (95.6%) that had latrines available, all of them were open to learner use that day.

[9] The seven items were: Do you track the reason for a student's absence from school in the school registrar? Is there a school improvement plan?; Do teachers have a weekly work plan or lesson plan for each subject?; Do you review the lesson plan and provide feedback each week?; How often do schools administrators summarize or compile school metrics?; Does the school have a time book for recording daily teacher attendance?; How often are teachers trained or do they meet to discuss best teaching practice?

[10] Note that the student survey questionnaire did ask students Have you been given/served food/meal in school yesterday?; Have you been given/served food/meal in school today?; and Are you given/served food/meal every day in the week at school?. However, responses were very low and at odds with internal monitoring data to suggest that potentially students we misinterpreting the questions.

[11] The question prompted students to think about the youngest and students with disabilities in order to get a sense of accessibility in terms of the most vulnerable.

Kitchen	The average kitchen observed has all the necessary equipment to provide meals to all pupils (55.56 percent of all kitchens). They are clean (75.56 percent) and are located within five minutes walking distance of the school (98.85 percent).[12]
Storeroom	Seventy-six of the 90 schools had a storeroom (84.44 percent)[13] Of those, more than two-thirds were recorded as organized, cleaned, and having everything it needs to provide meals to all pupils.[14]
Drinking Water	On the day of surveying, 38.89 percent of schools had no drinking water available.[15]
Handwashing	Nearly 20 percent of schools observed noted that learners did not wash their hands (or fewer than 25 percent that do).[16] Only 23.3 percent of schools have almost all of the learners engaging in proper hand washing.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

SUPPORTIVE TEACHERS AND CAREGIVERS

Only a small portion of learners stated teacher(s) helps me all of the time when asked if their teacher helps them do better at school. At midterm, only 11.25 percent of boys and 11.83 percent of girls state that their teachers help them all the time. There is no statistical difference between perceived level of helpfulness between boys and girls. However, ***more than 30 percent state that teachers help them all the time when a learner in the classroom is struggling or falling behind.*** 35.52 percent of boys and 32.38 percent of girls state that teachers help them all the time if they are struggling.[17]

[12] At baseline, while school observations were not done due to COVID-19 concerns, school directors were asked about their kitchen. A baseline 82 percent of student directors stated that their kitchens were functions and 95 percent were located within five minutes of the school. We did not collect additional information on what equipment was missing.

[13] At baseline, while school observations were not done due to COVID-19 concerns, school directors were asked about their kitchen. At baseline, 76.76 percent of school directors stated they had a storeroom. We did not ask any further questions of schools that did not have storeroom. Consider adding an additional question at endline.

[14] Enumerators were instructed to select one of the following: The storeroom has everything it needs to provide meals to all pupils; The storeroom mostly has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils. It could use additional supplies in one or two items; The storeroom has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in multiple items; The storeroom does not have everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in many items; The storeroom does not have the majority of the items it needs to provide meals to pupils. No follow-up questions were asked. Consider adding a question to identify missing equipment at endline.

[15] No water available at school. Water, if present, is provided by parents, children, or staff.

[16] 13 of the 18 schools where this was noted enumerators recorded 999 for if student had access to a handwashing system.

[17] These questions were not asked at baseline. The student survey was shortened considerably in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure.

At midterm, the largest portion of learners, between 44-48 percent, stated that their caregivers ***sometimes*** support them by ***helping with their schoolwork, reading with them, and talking to their teacher about their performance at school.***[18]

CHILD-CENTERED PROCESSES

At midterm, ***more than 40 percent of learners stated that they sometimes engage in child-centered processes in the classroom.*** This is across three indicators of child-centered classroom processes: We work in small groups or pairs during class; My teacher(s) encourage me to ask questions at school; and We have time to practice new concepts in class (beyond simply listening to the teacher/ copying down notes).

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY

At midterm, *most learners said that their teachers tell positive stories about girls and boys and that their homework requires them to engage with their community sometimes.* Over 70 percent of learners said that what they are learning in schools helps them in their daily life quite a bit.

SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

At midterm, ***learners report high levels of feeling safe traveling to and at school.*** Safety and perceptions of safety can drastically impact learners' ability to learn. Nearly 80 percent of all learners feel quite safe traveling to and from school and while at school. And over 50 percent feel almost always welcomed at school.[19]

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Clear across the qualitative accounts is the relevance of this project to meet the needs of the learners across the five regions. Participants agree that there are numerous barriers to education in Guinea-Bissau that the project interventions address. These can be summarized into teacher quality, school infrastructure, and poverty.

Qualitative reports also note that fluidity and tension remain between national level education policy and pragmatic realities in the classroom. For example, the official language of instruction is Portuguese, and therefore curriculum development and instruction are not allowed in Creole. This is at odds with the reality that Creole is commonly spoken and used widely.[20]

In addition, the accounts from key stakeholders suggest that the project could increase its engagement with the government. This aligns with the discussion above regarding the alignment of national education, but also extends to their collaboration on teacher trainings. However, interviews also highlighted the numerous stakeholders with whom the project engages to achieve growth on both strategic objective one and strategic objective two. Expanding far greater than just the classroom, the project takes a holistic approach by engaging with the government, the local community, and with educators.

[18] These questions were not asked at baseline. The student survey was shortened considerably in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure.
[19] Student who expressed feeling not welcomed were not asked any follow-up questions.
[20] Interview Participant #6; May 16th, 2023

The qualitative data also highlights a potential population that may not have been fully utilized by the project: learner's older siblings. A project manager discussed how working with older children to support the younger learner's literacy development can be an under-utilized strategy. "This adopted strategy consists of placing families at the center of their children's education."[21]

Regarding sustainability, interview data highlights the role of inflation in preventing local communities from fully taking ownership of school feeding programs. Specifically, domestic costs are increasing much faster and higher than on US donated commodities. Therefore, meeting the daily diet recommendations through locally and regionally procured goods is becoming more expensive than procuring internationally.

Lessons Learned

With the additions of new questions at midterm along with the change analysis conducted against baseline, the evaluations present multiple lessons learned for the project:

1. **Current project interventions to support literacy are not having the desired effect necessary to reach project goals.**

   While learning levels did significantly improve in some subtasks, we observed both backsliding on lower-level literacy skills along with stagnant growth in others. Given the time span of the project intervention it suggests a new approach be incorporated (recommendations are provided in the following section).

2. **Exposure to Portuguese in and outside of the classroom is directly related to higher literacy levels.**

   This finding was established at baseline and further solidified at the midterm.

3. **The project's work on increasing infrastructure for kitchens, storerooms, and latrines has been successful.**

   Future work on this should be focused on either maintenance or by focusing on the small number of schools that are observed to be low on these measures.

4. **Project's work on increasing access to water has not had the desired effect.**

   Resources should be increased to support close to one-third of schools that were observed to have no access to water at the school.

5. **Safety concerns are not a driving factor in low attendance rates.**

   Learners report at very high levels that they are quite safe travelling to school. Therefore, when looking to explain low rates of attendance, it is not likely that safety is playing a role.

[21] Interview Participant #3; May 15th, 2023

Recommendations

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The student survey should consider adding the following measures to further explore puzzles uncovered at midterm:

- The evaluation should look to understand how low teacher attendance affects students. It is possible, and probable, that the development of literacy skills is being hindered by low rates of teacher attendance.
- Further, the evaluation should investigate if there is there a misunderstanding of the questions surrounding food consumption. The juxtaposition of the survey data and project monitoring suggests that students are not understanding when asked if they ate today, yesterday, and across the week.

The school observation should consider adding the following measures:

- To further investigate the puzzle of the food consumption questions, a question can be added to measure if enumerators observe meals.

When asking to the school directors, new questions are recommended:

- School directors can be used to triangulate across school observations and the student surveys to understand the experience of the school feeding program.
- It is possible that both teacher and school director turnover is playing a role in many of the trends, such as the decrease in knowledge and skills among school administrators, that were identified at midterm. Therefore, questions should be developed and added to the school director form to measure both director and teacher turnover across the time period of the project.
- At midterm, we see a stark reduction in the percentage of directors who demonstrated five or more indicators of skills and knowledge. It is important to understand if this is the result of changing practices that are not captured in the current forms of measurement (i.e. they are engaging in new practices that demonstrate skills and knowledge but are not captured in the survey). If it is the former, the tools should be updated at endline.
- School directors could be asked to identify factors that drive teacher attendance and if these factors have changed in the last year. This data will help us understand changing levels of teacher attendance as seen between baseline and midterm.

Classroom observation protocol could be expanded to include the following:

- The role of Portuguese exposure and fluency is a notable finding at midterm. This can be further explored by understanding how much of classroom conversation is being done in local languages or in the official language of instruction.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider seriously the low number of learners who, at the end of second grade, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text**.**

The change analysis between baseline and midterm literacy scores suggests that large changes need to be made to interventions directed towards growth on strategic objective one. More instructional time during the day needs to be devoted to reading in school. And this reading needs to be done in Portuguese. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to collaborate across subjects in order to incorporate reading into other subjects such as mathematics. For example, word problems written in Portuguese would help increase the amount of instructional time learners spend reading during the day. Another strategy to increase time during the day reading would be to engage with parents and guardians to encourage reading in Portuguese in the home. For households who are fluent in Portuguese, co-reading should be integrated into daily home habits. In households where parents or guardians are not comfortable using Portuguese, dual language materials including both Portuguese and local language translation could be created to support reading in the home. A large component of reading fluency and comprehension is vocabulary. Teacher trainings, materials, and instructional time should prioritize vocabulary in Portuguese. Materials could be developed in both local languages and in Portuguese to support this development both within the classroom and if provided to families at home.

Examine the Portuguese language abilities of learners and teachers.
Overall learner performance may indicate that learners have a limited ability to understand spoken Portuguese. Learners who had higher exposure to Portuguese in the home did score better on the oral reading fluency subtask. Evaluation recommendations have been provided above to measure this in the next phase of the project. On the project side, teacher training should document both the level of fluency and degree of comfort teachers have with Portuguese, but more importantly emphasize the importance of teaching literacy skills in the official language of instruction. Training materials should highlight the importance of using the official language of instruction, but also provide resources for teachers who may not demonstrate mastery of the language.

Examine gender constraints within target communities.
The gender gap in scores on the EGRA between girls and boys deserves further exploration and may warrant a specific focus within the project to address underlying causes of these gender disparities although it is not uncommon among this age group in the region. Projects in Sierra Leone and Togo also documented lower literacy scores between girls and boys across the evaluation period. In this project, girls scored significantly lower on the EGRA than boys and baseline and at midterm. Interestingly though, no major gender differences were uncovered when analyzing learner responses to any of the intermediate outcomes analyzed at midterm. This suggests that the gender gap may be more foundational and require the project to focus on the underlying structures of girls' education in target communities. For example, research suggests that girls may be less likely to guess or be more anxious when test taking and this lack of confidence during evaluation could also potentially be driving the gender gap as testing anxiety can result in lower scores on assessments One potential strategy to overcome this is by engaging with girls to build their self-esteem and confidence both within and outside of the classroom.

Explore the decrease in skills and knowledge composite scores among school directors.
At midterm, we see a stark reduction in the percentage of school directors demonstrating 5 or more indicators of skills and knowledge. It is possible that either due to turnover or attrition the intervention done by the project early on are no longer having the effect originally observed. Encouragingly, the baseline evaluation suggests those interventions were successful. Therefore, it is recommended that the project simply re-implement and refresh school directors by re-doing this training.

Project structural interventions should focus on improving access to drinking water.
Access to drinking water was low at surveyed schools. While other infrastructure components like kitchens, storerooms, and latrines appeared accessible and functional in a majority of the schools, drinking water was primarily only available if it had been provided by parents. The project should prioritize this in the next phase. The evaluation would suggest that the project should focus on 35 schools where no water access of any kind was observed. In these cases, digging wells would provide long term access. There is currently no infrastructure observed to be rehabilitated.

Encourage proper sanitation practices in target communities.
Proper hand washing practices were not commonly observed at midterm. The project might want to consider incorporating educational content on this topic to promote best sanitation practices. Specifically, encouraging best practices in environments when handwashing systems may not be easily accessible as indicated by the data. Other projects STS has been involved with have provided posters near handwashing facilities that consisted of imagery demonstrating best practices that were successful.

Identify drivers of teacher attendance increase and institutionalize project practices.
Teacher attendance significantly increased at midterm. Women's attendance increased from 54 percent at baseline to 63 percent. Men's attendance increased from 48 percent at baseline to 64 percent. Project practices such as the training of 1,003 teachers during 2022, that focused on teacher attendance likely contributed to this increase and should be institutionalized to sustain it. Future evaluations may want to ask teachers in project schools what they think are the most impactful project activities as they relate to discouraging absenteeism (currently the evaluation does not include teachers). It is also quite possible that resolutions made after the teachers' strike are a driving factor in this increase for teacher attendance. The project should see if any of the grievances made by leaders of this strike were resolved and if so how. Further, if any remain unresolved, depending on the nature of the grievance, the project could dedicate resources to them for teachers within project schools. There remains room for growth with close to one out of every three teachers being absent on the day of the evaluation.

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1. Project Context

Guinea-Bissau is a small West African coastal nation situated between Senegal and Guinea and extending north to the Sahel. Guinea-Bissau has nine administrative regions that covers 36,125 square kilometers. The country's capital city, Bissau, is home to approximately one-fifth of the population, with the rest of the population spread across mostly rural zones in the eight other regions of the country.[22] Guinea-Bissau's history has been marked by political turmoil, a civil war, and multiple coup d'états since its independence from Portugal in 1974. The country's unstable political environment has contributed to poverty, corruption, and many social issues. It is one of the world's poorest countries, ranked on the United Nations Human Development Index at 175 out of 189 countries.[23]

Portuguese is the official language of Guinea-Bissau. However, it is estimated that less than one-fifth of the population speaks Portuguese, while the majority speak Crioulo, a Portuguese-based Creole.[24] Guinea-Bissau's education system lacks resources for sufficient school materials, educational infrastructure, and trained teachers.[25] A report from Guinea-Bissau's Education Sectoral Program (2017-2025) notes that Grade 2 learners in Guinea-Bissau do not master half of the Portuguese or mathematics content they are expected to, and this gap between educational expectations and reality only increases through the later years of primary school.[26] Around 60 percent of the population over the age of 15 can read and write.[27]

According to the 2018-19 Guinea-Bissau Multiple Indicators Survey report, access to learning materials remains a huge challenge for learners. Only 0.5 percent of five-year-old children have three or more children's learning books.[28]

It is estimated that only 72 percent of school-age children attend primary school at all. There is a large difference in enrollment rates for learners depending on whether they live in urban or rural areas.[29]

Teachers have gone on strike several times in the past few years due to delayed salary payments. Teacher strikes have disrupted the school calendar and impacted the quality of learners' education. The 2017-2025 Education Sector Strategic Plan was developed, but it faces implementation challenges.

During the 2010-11 school year, a system-wide reform subdivided the education system into six subsectors which are still adhered to today: Pre-school Education, Basic Education, Technical and Professional Training, Higher Education and Literacy. Pre-school education is aimed at children aged three

[22] https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/guinea-bissau/
[23] https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/07/people-share-priorities-first-ever-review-guinea-bissaus-sustainable-development
[24] https://pollylingu.al/pt/en/regions/55
[25] https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/guinea-bissau/
[26] http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/guinea-bissau-esp-2017-2025.pdf
[27] https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/guinea-bissau/
[28] https://mics-surveys-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/MICS6/Westpercent20andpercent20Centralpercent20Africa/Guinea-Bissau/2018-2019/Surveypercent20findings/Guineapercent20Bissaupercent202018-19percent20MICSpercent20Surveypercent20Findingspercent20Report_Portuguese.pdf
[29] UNICEF 2022 https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/primary-education/

to five years. It is provided in kindergartens or daycare centers that are mostly community-based, private, or run by religious institutions. Children are not required to attend pre-school. The basic education sector is aimed at children aged six to 14 years and includes grades one through nine.

1.2. Project Description

In 2019, USDA awarded CRS Guinea-Bissau a four-year, $17 million project under the -McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program. The MeREECE project – Promotion of Educational and Economic Performance in Educative Communities or *Melhoria do Rendimento Escolar e Económico das Comunidades Educativas* – runs from September 23, 2019, to August 31, 2024 This program targets 321 primary schools and is implemented in the regions of Bafata, Cacheu, Gabu, Quinara, and Oio.

Over the project's five-year implementation period, CRS used donated commodities and funds provided by the Foreign Agricultural Service to implement a e project focused on achieving the following objectives:

- Improve teachers' and school administrators' ability to deliver quality literacy instruction through training and recognizing teacher performance.
- Improve the Ministry of Education's (MoE's) capacity to monitor and support teachers' technical development through capacity strengthening training and joint monitoring visits.
- Increase learner attentiveness and attendance by reducing child hunger through nutritious school meals.
- Improve learner attendance by establishing child-friendly school environments, school libraries, and extracurricular learning opportunities and by providing take-home rations.
- Increase parents' and communities' involvement in education outcomes for their children.
- Increase knowledge and improve health, nutrition, and dietary practices of teachers, learners, and parents.

This ambitious project integrates the best practices and lessons learned from previous CRS McGovern-Dole projects and the previous McGovern-Dole phases in Guinea-Bissau. CRS works with technical partners—Plan International and Caritas Guinea-Bissau—that have extensive experience in the education and health sectors in Guinea-Bissau. CRS aims to reach a total of 199,539 direct beneficiaries. Through advocacy as well as institutional and technical support, MeREECE interventions increase capacity of the MoE at a national level as well as technical and administrative staff at the regional level in Bafata, Cacheu, Gabu, Quinara, and Oio.

1.3. Results Framework

The project strategy is aligned with USDA McGovern-Dole's two strategic objectives (SO):

- SO 1: Improved literacy of school-age children
- SO 2: Increased use of improved health, nutrition, and dietary practices

MEREECE THEORY OF CHANGE

MeREECE will align with USDA McGovern-Dole's results framework to provide a relevant response for improved education outcomes in Guinea-Bissau founded in its two main strategic objectives and elaborated in two inter-locking theories of change.

SO1: The first theory of change is inspired by the work of Serena Masino and Miguel Nino-Zarazua, which posits that there are three core drivers of change that, when addressed, will improve literacy outcomes for children.[30] If these three drivers are addressed: 1) supply-side capacity strengthening (increased teacher capacity and pedagogical support and oversight, adaptation and development of improved literacy tools including continuous assessments, school feeding, and improved school infrastructure); 2) incentives for behavior change (awareness raising on the importance of education, leaner and teacher recognition, adult literacy, take home rations for girls, extracurricular activities, school meals, and increased household financial access); and 3) bottom up and top-down government and community engagement (capacity strengthening in coordination, budgeting, and planning for national and decentralized government and COGES/APEs, promotion of a child-friendly school model, advocacy to increase commitment) then literacy of school-age will be improved. There is ample evidence that shows the relationship between these drivers and increased quality of education in Guinea-Bissau. The understanding that these links are even stronger when multiple weaknesses are simultaneously addressed has driven the design of MeREECE's holistic package of interventions.

SO2: The second theory of change posits that if parents, teachers, and learners have increased knowledge about nutrition, health, and WASH in conjunction with access to nutritious foods and health and WASH services, then they will adopt better health and dietary practices that will reduce teachers' and learners' health-related absences and improve leaner attendance and learning.

These strategic axes are essential in McGovern-Dole's approach to respond to the complex problem of the population's limited access to high-quality education. This strategy is also illustrated by the theory of change starting from the problem analysis of causal pathways to the respective expected results. Ultimately, MeREECE, which means "merit" in Portuguese, aims to offer a robust package of 12 key interventions that drive literacy outcomes while providing nutritious school meals to primary learners in 321 schools across the country.

Both SOs are supported as outlined in the MeREECE results frameworks, as seen in Figure 6 and Figure 7.[30]

[30] Masino, S., Nin˜o-Zarazu´ a, M., What works to improve the quality of leaner learning in developing countries? Int. J. Educ. Dev. (2015), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2015.11.012

Figure 6. SO1: Results Framework

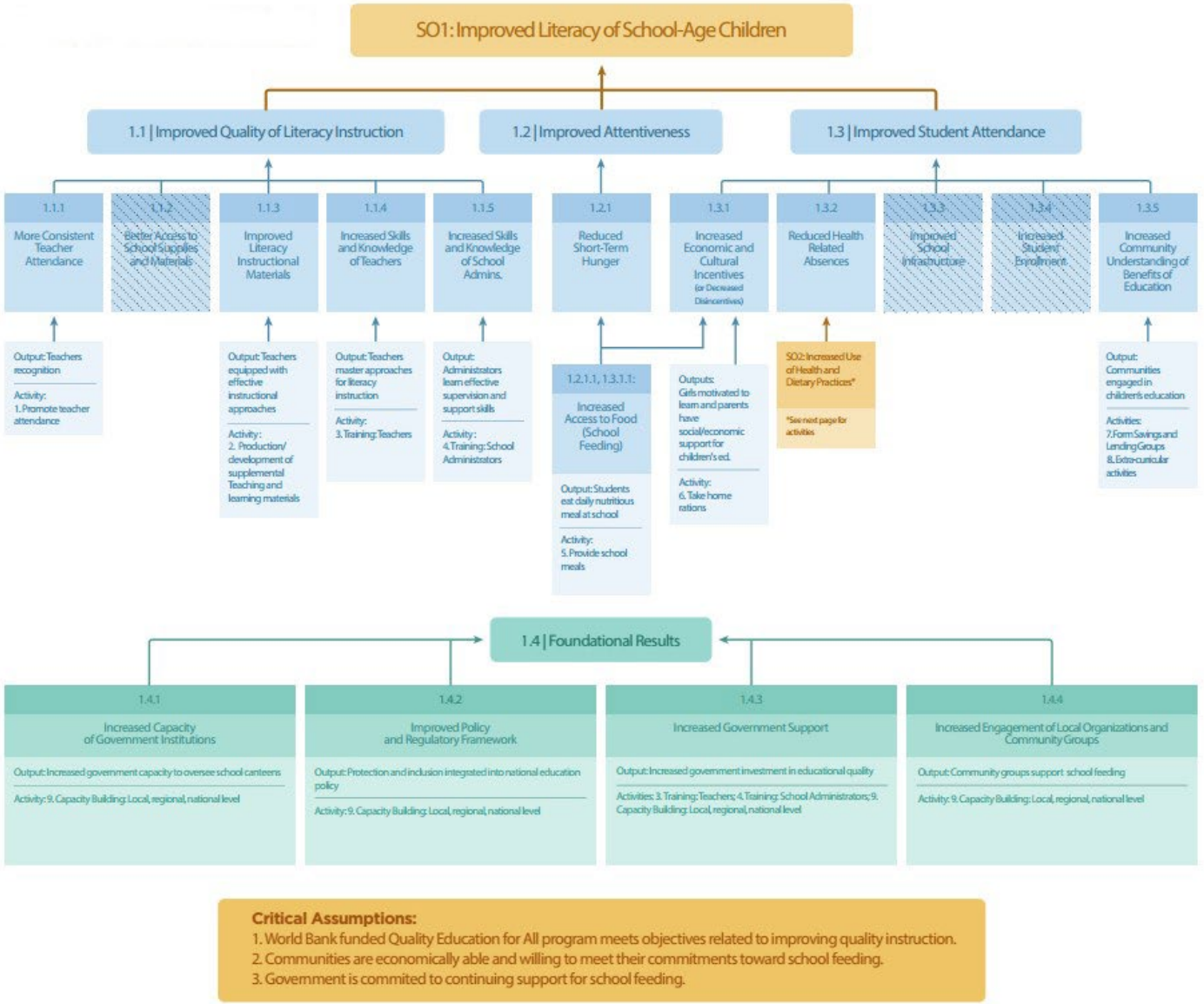
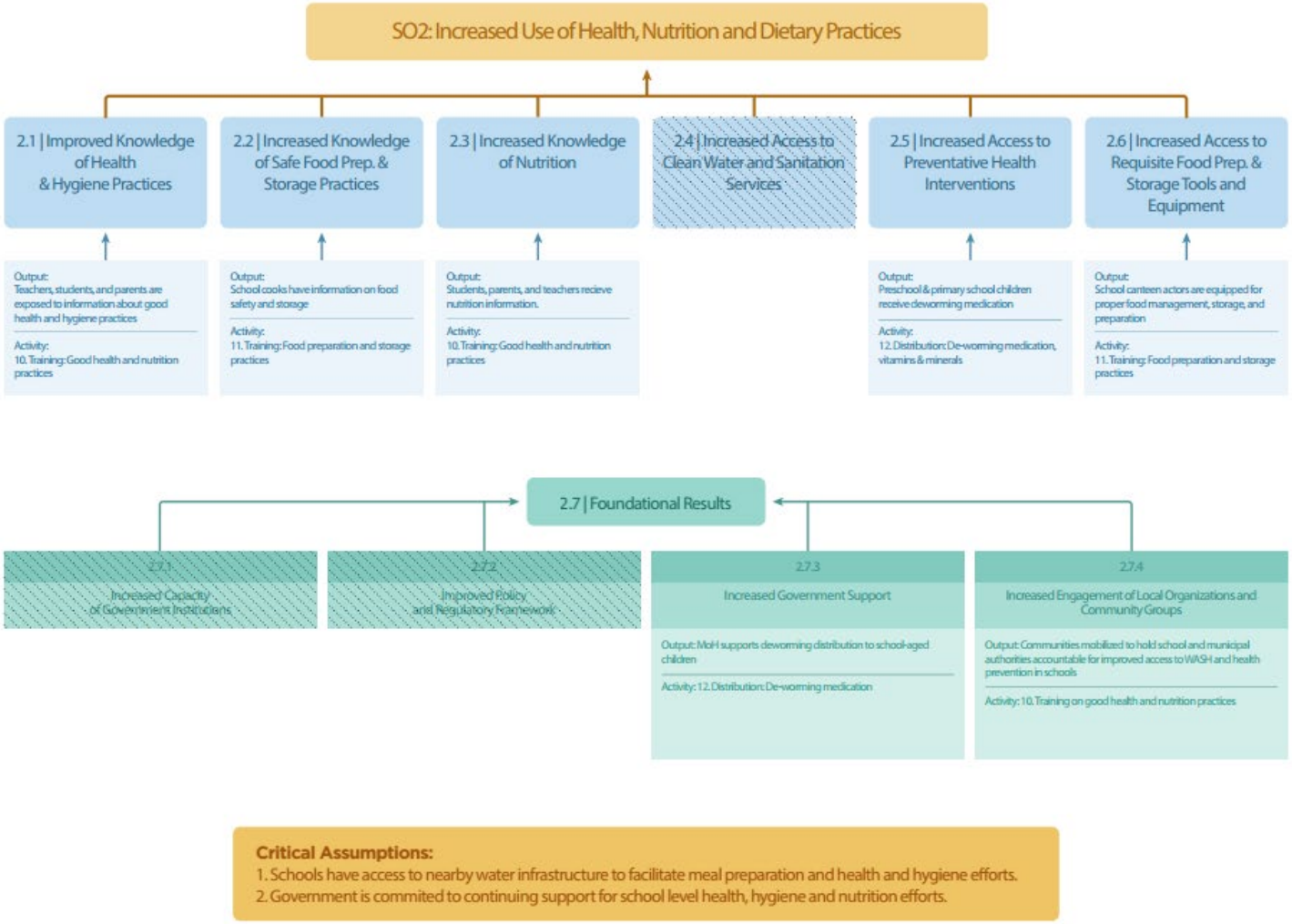


Figure 7. SO2: Results Framework



Critical Assumptions:
1. Schools have access to nearby water infrastructure to facilitate meal preparation and health and hygiene efforts.
2. Government is commited to continuing support for school level health, hygiene and nutrition efforts.

Under the project's first SO, MeREECE implements several school-based activities to improve school-age children's literacy in 350 intervention schools. CRS recognizes teachers' critical role in learners' learning and focuses on teachers' professional development through training and performance incentives. With an emphasis on sustainability, CRS also improves the capacity of the MoE to provide oversight and support to teachers. The MeREECE program provides daily school meals at all intervention schools as the heart of its intervention to encourage learners' attendance and attentiveness as well as take home rations.

The project's second SO seeks to increase the use of health and dietary practices. CRS's activities focus on promoting health, nutrition, and personal hygiene initiatives within the schools and communities. MeREECE provides training to food preparers, school administrators, and local leaders on proper food preparation, storage, and sanitation practices. MeREECE distributes de-worming medication, vitamins, and minerals for learners in pre-primary and primary schools.

To achieve these ambitious goals and move towards local and national sustainability by the end of this project phase, the MeREECE project team consistently works alongside local communities, organization partners, and government ministries, departments, and agencies.

1.4. Purpose of the Evaluation

The MeREECE evaluation process involves three phases: a baseline, midterm, and final evaluation. This report summarizes the methodology and findings of the midterm evaluation. The midterm evaluation applied the same methodology and tools used in the baseline assessment. The main objective of this iteration was to assess and report on the situation in the five target regions during the MeREECE interventions. The midterm sought to examine and provide feedback on the implementation of program, as well as determine the extent of the results achieved. The midterm evaluation furthermore assessed progress on the implementation of project activities using the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact; analyzed initial effects of the program; and identified obstacles to achieving results. Midterm findings also documented lessons learned and provided recommendations for continued management and operations.

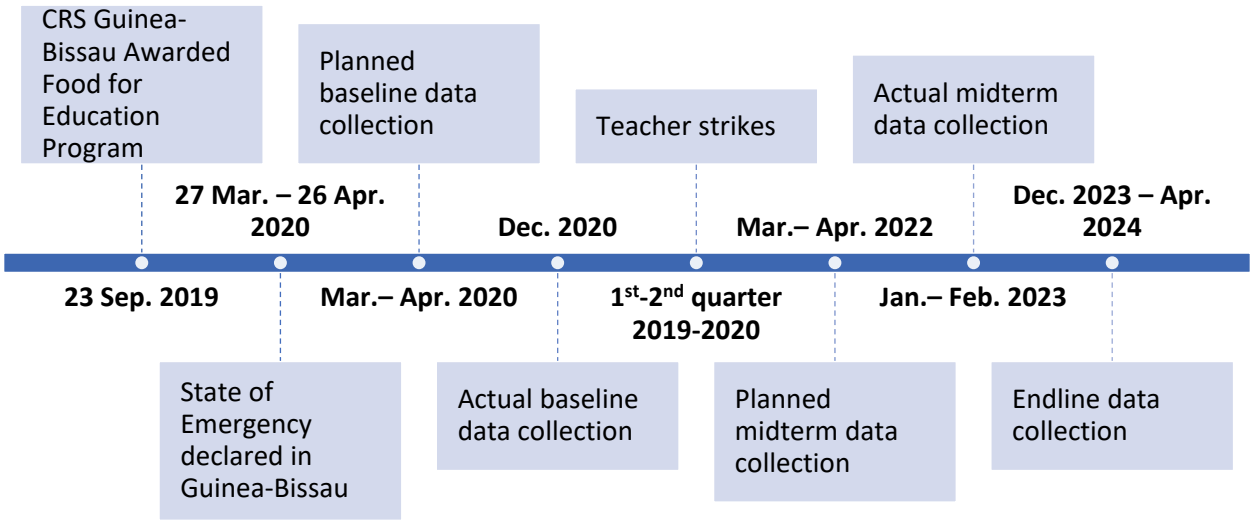
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the baseline data collection and evaluation was postponed from the end of the 2019-20 academic year to the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year. Under the new timeline, learners were assessed at the start of Grade 3 rather than at the end of Grade 2. These Grade 3 learners serve as a proxy for end-of-Grade 2 learners as their exposure to Grade 3 instruction was minimal at the time of the evaluation.

Assessing learners at the start of a new academic year as a proxy measure for learner learning levels at the end of the prior academic year is a common practice among education evaluations. COVID-19-related school closures in Spring 2020 meant that learners entering Grade 3 in the 2020-21 school year had not been exposed to the full Grade 2 curriculum by the start of the new school year. Thus, baseline data collection took place with Grade 3 learners two months into the 2020-21 academic year to respond to the study aim of measuring learners' literacy levels at the end of Grade 2.

In order to be comparable to baseline, midterm data collection followed the same design. Grade 3 learners were sampled to serve as a proxy for learners at the end of Grade 2. Midterm data collection began January 30, 2023 and completed on February 8, 2023, with three replacement schools utilized by February

23.[31] A timeline graphic of key dates in the MeREECE project is provided in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Timeline of Key Events in MeREECE Project



2. Evaluation Design and Methodology

2.1. Evaluation Questions

Th baseline and midterm evaluations assessed progress in the implementation of project activities and overall performance using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact of the Development Assistance Committee, to identify the first indications of the impact of the project. Additional data was collected through questionnaires, qualitative interviews, and observations to triangulate data and provide more in-depth information to address the questions described below:

Relevance	1. To what extent do the project's interventions meet the educational, socio-economic, cultural, and political needs of beneficiaries? 2. To what extent are project interventions aligned with the education strategy outlined in the Guinea-Bissau Education Sector Plan (2017-2025) 3. Are stakeholders satisfied with their participation in the project? Why or why not?
Efficiency	4. To what extent has the project achieved its goals and targets (including increasing enrollment, retaining girls, reducing

[31] Enumerators could not access EBU Bartolomeu, EBU de Timate, or Indira Ghandy. Instead, they visited EB de Mato Dingal, Ensino Basico Djita 2, and Nhoma.

	dropouts, reducing hunger in schools, improving teacher and student attendance)? 5. Which interventions contributed most significantly to the expected results or objectives? 6. To what extent does the project coordinate and collaborate with other stakeholders?
Effectiveness	7. To what extent have project resources (inputs) achieved the results achieved? 8. Can the same results be achieved with fewer resources or alternative approaches?
Sustainability	9. What progress has been made to reach the sustainability milestones presented in the graduation and sustainability plan document? 10. Is there evidence of community capacity to take ownership of project activities and are they meeting their commitments outlined in their MOUs (providing wood, cooks, complementary foods for meals, staple foods for 2-4 days coverage per month, etc.)? Are there any spontaneous actions that APEs/COGES have taken to maintain/improve school infrastructures?
Impact	11. What were the expected and unintended positive and negative effects of the intervention on children, communities and institutions? How does the intervention affect the well-being of different groups of stakeholders, including the most vulnerable and at-risk children? 12. What do beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the project perceive as the effects of the intervention on themselves?

2.2. Evaluation Design

CRS explored several evaluation approaches used in similar programs and identified the most rigorous evaluation plan possible—subject to time, quality, resources, and country context constraints. For ethical reasons, a randomized experimental approach is inappropriate to apply to primary schools in Guinea-Bissau, given that school-age children throughout the country require food assistance. For logistical reasons, an experimental or quasi-experimental approach is also not feasible given the country context in which multiple actors (UNICEF, World Bank, WFP, etc.) are implementing education assistance projects throughout all regions of Guinea-Bissau. Moreover, conversations with key stakeholders at UNICEF and the MoE indicate that plans are in place to completely overhaul the education system, which is currently in a state of crisis. The MoE has been working with partners to revise the entire curriculum for Grades 1 through 6, and the new curriculum for Grades 1 through 4 is currently being field-tested. These factors posed challenges in distinguishing the McGovern-Dole project's impact from other ongoing efforts to

improve the quality of education and literacy among school-aged children. Therefore, CRS decided that a non-experimental performance evaluation is the most feasible and appropriate approach. CRS then subcontracted the assessment to an external evaluation team, School-to-School International (STS).

2.3. Sampling methods

STS utilized a two-stage cluster sampling approach to select schools and school-based respondents randomly in the five MeREECE intervention regions. In the first stage, schools were selected at random, proportionally to the population of schools by region. STS collaborated with CRS to finalize the sample calculation and randomly select schools from the sampling frame. In the second stage, enumerators selected learners in Grade 3 at random within each school, using a specific random selection procedure. To achieve the necessary sample size for statistically significant findings, STS included 90 schools in the midterm sample with a target of 20 learners per school.

Table 1: Midterm Sample

	Tool	N
	Learners	1,642
	School Directors	90
	School Observation	90
	Classroom Observations	87

2.4. Data Collection Methods

Informed Consent

Prior to the start of data collection, enumerators met with the School Director at each school to introduce themselves, explain the purpose of the data collection, discuss what support they needed from the School Director, and receive permission to proceed with the activity. School Directors identified the Grade 3 classroom(s) from which enumerators would select the learners for the EGRA. Additionally, a Grade 2 classroom(s) if available, if not, grade 1-6, in which enumerators would complete a one-hour observation.[32]

At the start of the EGRA administration, enumerators introduced themselves and explained the activity to learners, then enumerators asked learners individually if they were willing to participate. Learners did not have to participate. If a learner said they did not want to participate, then the enumerator escorted the learner back to class and selected a new learner.

[32] 52 observations were from Grade 2 classrooms (59.77 percent), seven observations from Grade 1 (8.05 percent), 20 observations from Grade 3 (22.99 percent), 6 observations from Grade 4 (6.90 percent), and 1 observation from Grade 5 and Grade 6 (1.15 percent each). Three classrooms could not be observed out of the 90 schools.

Personally identifiable information of respondents was not recorded. However, because schools only have one School Director and may only have one Grade 2 teacher, it is possible that the identity of respondents on the School Director survey and the classroom observation could be identified based on the school name. As such, all findings are aggregated, and no data is reported by school.

Data Collection Tools

The midterm study collected quantitative data in the form of surveys with learners and school directors, school and classroom observations, and learner EGRAs. To mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission during data collection at baseline, the scope of data collection was streamlined from the original plan. Some tools were removed, and the remaining tools were shortened to limit the amount of time enumerators needed to spend at each school visiting with learners, teachers, and school directors. New questions were added at midterm. The EGRA at baseline was kept as-is to ensure no changes to the validity or reliability of the assessment tool.

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

STS administered a baseline EGRA to Grade 3 learners to measure their core early grade reading skills. The baseline and midterm EGRA tool was adapted from an EGRA tool originally developed by Plan Guinea-Bissau. The EGRA contained six subtasks, which were administered in Portuguese: letter name identification, initial sound identification, familiar word reading, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Table 2 provides a summary of the subtasks. It is important to note that the non-word reading subtasks was determined to be not a good fit for the context and was removed. After an internal review by a language expert, the words used in the non-word subtask were determined to not follow common syllabic formations or standard phonemic principles that would be expected and therefore familiar to learners in this context.

Table 2. EGRA Subtasks

Subtask	Core Reading Skill	Subtask Description
Initial sound identification	Phonemic awareness	Identify the first sound in a list of five familiar words spoken aloud by the enumerator.
Letter name identification	Alphabet knowledge	Provide the name of 40 letters presented in both uppercase and lowercase in a random order.
Familiar word reading	Word recognition	Read 20 familiar words that are randomly ordered and drawn from a list of frequent words.
Oral reading fluency	Decoding and reading	Read a short, grade-appropriate passage of 68 words with accuracy and little effort.
Reading comprehension	Reading comprehension	Respond correctly to five questions, including four literal questions and one inferential question, about the passage read in the previous subtask.

Enumerators aimed to administer the EGRA to 20 Grade 3 learners at each school on tablets using Tangerine®, an electronic data collection software. The numbers of learners assessed at each school ranged from three to 23. In schools with fewer than 20 Grade 3 learners, enumerators assessed all Grade

3 learners present that day. In some schools, enumerators assessed more than 20 learners if time permitted. In total, 1,642 learners were assessed across sampled schools therefore achieving 91.61 percent of our target sample.

Following the end of the EGRA subtasks, enumerators administered a short survey to learners. Enumerators asked learners about their age, the languages used at home and in the classroom, and their diet. The survey was administered in Portuguese, but enumerators were able to rephrase, explain, and repeat questions as needed to ensure learners understood the question prior to responding.

Surveys and Observation Checklist

At each sampled school, enumerators administered one survey to the School Director, completed one school observation, and conducted one observation of a Grade 2 classroom. STS developed the surveys in close collaboration with CRS Guinea-Bissau. For the School Director survey and school observation, STS first drafted survey questions and observation items in English, based on experience with previously validated survey tools on other McGovern-Dole evaluations. Items were then reviewed by CRS staff for cultural appropriateness, relevance, and alignment to project indicators. Once the tools' content was agreed with CRS, STS translated the tools into Portuguese using an online professional translation service. CRS staff in Guinea-Bissau then reviewed, revised, and finalized the Portuguese translations. For the classroom observation tool, STS used CRS's standardized education sector classroom observation tool and protocol. This tool was already translated into Portuguese by CRS and is designed to be used across all of CRS's education projects worldwide.

As at baseline, the qualitative data component at midterm was reduced to minimize enumerator contact with respondents due to COVID-19 concerns. The evaluator determined with CRS that a remote interview with one respondent and an online open-ended survey with six respondents would be utilized to collect qualitative data. Additionally, a emote KII was conducted with a USDA staff member who had been involved with the project. This KII was used to gain regional perspective and broaden the recommendations by putting the project in perspective with like projects. Further, additional qualitative data was collected from six key MeREECE project staff through an online, open-ended survey after the quantitative data had been collected. These short form questionnaires focused on projects interventions, strategies, and recommendations. At endline, the evaluator will determine with CRS the scope of the qualitative component to gather data from implementing partners, USDA, local authorities and community groups.

Secondary project monitoring data was provided by CRS and incorporated into this report. This includes initial and final enrollment totals for students, teachers, and school directors.

Data Collection and Quality Assurance

This section describes the midterm evaluation's operational details, including enumerator training, data collection, and data management and analysis.

Enumerator Training

STS contracted a West African firm, Innovative Hub for Research in Africa (IHfRA), to conduct the midterm data collection in January and February 2023. IHfRA recruited 41 enumerators and three facilitators to participate in the training, with the top participants to be selected for deployment in data collection.

STS conducted a remote training of master trainers from January 9-13, 2023. This was followed by an in-person six-day training of the enumerators between January 16-24, 2023 in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau. STS

provided remote support for master trainers on an as needed basis. The training covered the contents of the EGRA subtasks and school-based surveys and observations, administration protocols for the data collection software and use of tablets, ethical considerations, and the responsibilities of enumerators and supervisors during data collection. The training included one day of field testing in a nearby school in Bissau to allow the enumerators an opportunity to practice administering the EGRA and surveys in a real-life setting before the start of data collection. At the end of the training, STS and IHfRA selected 27 of the highest performing enumerators to participate in data collection.

Data Collection

The midterm data collection was conducted from January 30 – February 10, 2023, with two replacement schools being completed by February 23. Nine teams of three—consisting of two enumerators who administered the EGRA and learner survey and one enumerator who conducted the school-based surveys and observations—visited one or two schools per day. One enumerator was designated as the supervisor responsible for introducing the teams to the school and conducting the learner sampling.

IHfRA regional supervisors provided on-the-ground data collection supervision in the field, while STS closely collaborated with IHfRA to provide daily remote data quality assurance. STS conducted daily spot-checks and discussed any issues that emerged with IHfRA in real-time via WhatsApp. Supervisors completed forms at each school to document the number and type of assessments, observations, and surveys completed, as well as noted any issues or challenges in the field. STS maintained detailed documentation of all issues encountered in a tracker, which was used as part of the data cleaning process. Additionally, enumerators' use of electronic data capture via tablets contributed to data quality, consistency, and collection efficiency by streamlining fieldwork as well as reducing measurement and data entry errors.

Utilization and Communication of Results

CRS will use the midterm evaluation results to inform project monitoring and knowledge management systems, including developing recommendations and an action plan related to evaluation findings. CRS will also organize in-person and online dissemination sessions at the local and national levels to present the results to key stakeholders and beneficiaries and collect comments on the findings. Participants will include students, teachers, school administrators, community-based educational support associations (APE, COGES), local leaders, technical partners, government representatives and USDA representatives.

2.5. Data Analysis Methods

STS cleaned and prepared for analysis the quantitative data collected through the EGRA, surveys, and school and classroom observation tools. STS worked with IHfRA to ensure all missing data were handled appropriately and that STS's thorough, four-step cleaning process was adhered to. Cleaning was completed using R and Stata statistical packages and included a comprehensive outlier analysis of quantitative results to establish data consistency. STS utilized frameworks based on best practice and specific experience in evaluating reading and health activities to guide the analysis.

STS applied sampling weights to the learners' data to produce more representative estimates in the sample. To compute sampling weights, STS used the following information about all the schools in the relevant population: region, number of learners enrolled, and number of learners in attendance. This data was collected through the School Director survey and school observation.

After applying the weighting functions, STS produced descriptive statistics. Descriptive results were analyzed for statistically significant differences by gender and between baseline and midterm by using weighted and unweighted ordinary least squares regressions.

2.6. Evaluation Limitations

The following limitations should be considered when reviewing the findings of the MeREECE midterm:

- **Language of the EGRA tool.** The instructions for the EGRA were in Portuguese. Based on the learner survey results, it is likely that many learners struggle with understanding Portuguese, so learners may not have understood the instructions of the EGRA subtasks well.
- **Inherent bias in sampling children present on the day of assessment.** Learners' EGRA results may be biased towards the types of learners who attend school regularly and may exclude those learners who are enrolled but do not attend regularly. However, this random sampling method on the day of the assessment is preferable to sampling learners in advance, as it may create opportunities for manipulation to have only high performers participate. This sampling approach will remain the same at future assessments to ensure comparison across timepoints remains valid. It is also possible that bias was introduced by allowing school directors to select the Grade 3 classroom, however, this was necessary in order to minimally disrupt school activities.
- **Reduced sample size.** The target learner sample was 1,800 learners. However, after data cleaning, only 1,642 learners are included in the analysis. The reduced sample size is due to a combination of factors including many schools having fewer than 20 learners in Grade 3 and some assessments being removed during the data cleaning process because of quality control checks.[33]

3. Findings

3.1 SO1: School-Age Children in Guinea-Bissau Have Improved Literacy

Indicator 1: Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction (IR 1.1)

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition project's first SO is to improve the literacy of school-age children. Achievement of this SO is measured through the percentage of learners who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text (McGovern-Dole Standard Indicator #1).

The specified threshold used in this analysis is that a learner can correctly answer at least four of the five reading comprehension questions correctly. Midterm values for this indicator were captured by administering the EGRA tool to boys and girls at the mid-point of Grade 3. At baseline the proportion of learners who met this threshold is 0.67 percent, or 11 out of 1,649 learners. This increase at midterm to 0.91 percent (weighted) or 21 out of 1,642 learners.[34] By year four, the project had set a target that 55 percent of learners would, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text. Midterm results fall well below the target.

[33] 14 percent of schools in the sample had less than 20 learners present with the average number of students present on the day of evaluation being 17.3.

[34] This is a significant increase as measured by the Pearson Chi Squared test (p=.003)

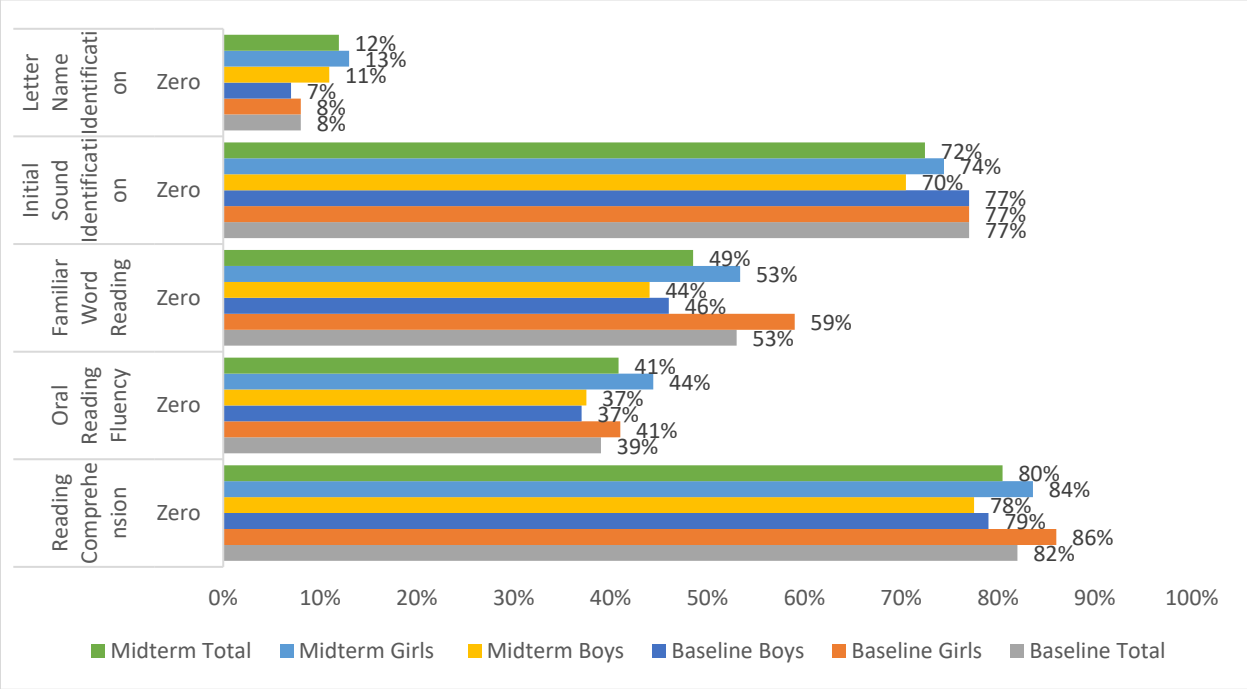
The proportion of learners who did not answer a single item correct for each subtask—known as a zero score—is presented in Figure 9 as a total percentage and disaggregated by gender. The proportion of learners receiving zero scores was lowest on the letter naming subtask (12 percent) and highest on the reading comprehension subtask (80 percent). Across all subtasks, boys had a lower proportion of zero scores than did girls. This difference is statistically significant in reading comprehension, oral reading fluency, and familiar word reading. The gender gap was not statistically significant in initial sound identification and letter name identification.

Zero scores significantly improved for initial sounds identification across girls and boys. At baseline, 77 of girls and boys could not identify a single initial sound correctly, this dropped to 70 percent for boys and 74 percent for girls. Familiar word zero scores statistically improved for girls and overall, going from 59 percent to 53 percent and 53 percent to 49 percent respectively. We do not see a statistically significant difference among boys, but it should be noted that is likely because boys were performing significantly better at baseline in comparison.

Notably, we see a regression from baseline performance on letter name identification. At baseline, only eight percent of the sample received zero scores, this increased significantly to 12 percent. For boys, at baseline only seven percent of learners could not identify a single letter name correctly, whereas at midterm this increased 11 percent. For girls, at baseline only eight percent of learners could not identify a single letter name correctly, whereas at midterm this increased 13 percent.

Zero scores on reading comprehension and oral reading fluency observationally improved, but not enough to reach the threshold of statistical significance. Looking at reading comprehension boys, at baseline only 79 percent of learners could not answer a single reading comprehension correctly, whereas at midterm this increased 78 percent. For girls, at baseline only 86 percent of learners could not answer a single reading comprehension correctly, whereas at midterm this increased 84 percent. Looking at oral reading fluency boys, at baseline only 79 percent of learners could not read a single word out of 68 correctly. For girls, at baseline only 86 percent of learners could not read a single word out of 68 correctly, whereas at midterm this increased 84 percent.

Figure 9: Literacy Assessment Subtasks Zero Scores



Mean scores for each EGRA subtask are presented in the following section, providing a better understanding of learners' reading performance. STS used weighted ordinary least squares regression analyses determine the difference in mean scores between boys and girls across time and between groups at midterm; statistically significant differences are noted below each table.

Initial Sound Identification

For the initial sound identification subtask, enumerators read a simple, familiar word aloud twice to the learner and asked the learner to say the first sound in each word. This subtask measures learners' awareness of phonemes and their ability to distinguish among multiple phonemes.

Midterm results for the initial sound identification subtask are presented in Table 3. At midterm, the mean initial sound identification score remains under one. Boys on average were able to identify 0.83 sounds on average and girls were able to identify 0.72 sounds on average. This is a statistically significant increase from baseline; however, learners are still performing poorly on this subtask. At midterm boys' scores were significantly higher than girls scores indicating that the gender gap remains from baseline.

Table 3: Initial Sound Identification Mean Scores by Gender (Correct out of 5)

	Baseline		Midterm		
Gender	**N**	**Mean Score**	**N**	**Mean Score**	**Standard Error**
Boys***^	807	0.52	815	0.83	0.02
Girls***	842	0.52	827	0.72	1.51
Total***	1,649	0.52	1,642	0.78	0.03

Note: * denote significance level between timepoints (Baseline to Midterm) * p< .10, ** p<.05, and *** p<.001. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. N is unweighted count, mean score is average weighted sum, and standard deviation is from weighted mean score.

Letter Name Identification

In the letter name identification subtask, enumerators presented learners with a grid of 40 letters in uppercase and lowercase and asked learners to say the name of as many letters as they could in two minutes. The letter name identification subtask measures learners' knowledge of letters of the alphabet and their ability to recognize each letter's graphemic features.

Baseline and Midterm results for the letter name identification subtask are presented in Table 4. Both boys' and girls' performance on this subtask significantly improved since baseline. Boys on average were able to name 27.63 out of 40 letters on average – an increase from 26.62. Girls on average were able to name 25.21 letters on average – an increase from 25.21 words on average. The gender gap, boys scoring significantly higher than girls, is still present at midterm.

Notably, zero scores increased on this subtask. Therefore, while on average scores improved the lower band of learner knowledge increased suggesting that some learners may not be being reached by teaching strategies focused on increasing knowledge of letters.

Table 4: Letter Name Identification Mean Scores by Gender (Correct out of 40)

	Baseline		Midterm		
Gender	**N**	**Mean Score**	**N**	**Mean Score**	**Standard Error**
Boys*^	807	26.62	815	27.63	0.43
Girls***	842	23.61	827	25.21	0.40
Total***	1,649	25.09	1,642	26.47	0.35

Note: * denote significance level between timepoints (Baseline to Midterm) * p< .10, ** p<.05, and *** p<.001. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. N is unweighted count, mean score is average weighted sum, and standard deviation is from weighted mean score.

Familiar Word Reading

For the familiar word reading subtask, learners were presented with a grid of 20 words. Enumerators asked learners to read aloud as many words as they could in one minute.

Baseline and midterm results for the familiar word reading subtask are presented in Table 5. Learners' ability to read familiar words significantly increase from baseline. While at baseline girls on average were only able to identify 2.96 words on average, at midterm girls on average were able to identify 3.82 words. Boys, who at baseline could identify 4.35 words, were able to identify 5.50 words.

Table 5: Familiar Word Reading Mean Scores by Sex (Correct out of 20)

	Baseline		Midterm		
Gender	**N**	**Mean Score**	**N**	**Mean Score**	**Standard Error**
Boys***^	807	4.35	815	5.50	0.24

Girls***	842	2.96	827	3.82	0.19
Total***	1,649	3.64	1,642	4.65	0.18
Note: * denote significance level between timepoints (Baseline to Midterm) * p< .10, ** p<.05, and *** p<.001. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. N is unweighted count, mean score is average weighted sum, and standard deviation is from weighted mean score.					

Reading Passage and Reading Comprehension

For the reading passage and reading comprehension subtasks, learners were presented with a short story of 68 words and were asked to read as much of the story aloud as they could in one minute. After finishing, enumerators asked up to five comprehension questions—four literal and one inferential—out loud to learners to test their understanding of the story's content. Learners were only asked comprehension questions which corresponded to how far into the reading passage the learner had read. These two subtasks measure decoding and reading comprehension.

Baseline and Midterm results for the reading passage subtask are presented in Table 6. From a short story of 68 words, learners were able to read more words of the story than at baseline. Girls at baseline were only able to read 6.78 words on average, this increased to 8.28 at midterm. Boys at baseline were able to read 8.93 words on average which increased to 11.44 words on average. Despite the significant increase, the majority of learners could not read the story aloud. At midterm, there is still a significant difference between girls' and boys' performance on the reading passage subtask.

Table 6: Reading Passage Mean Scores by Gender (Correct out of 68)

	Baseline		Midterm		
Gender	**N**	**Mean Score**	**N**	**Mean Score**	**Standard Error**
Boys***^	807	8.93	815	11.44	0.53
Girls***	842	6.78	827	8.28	0.39
Total***	1,649	7.83	1,642	9.92	0.38
Note: * denote significance level between timepoints (Baseline to Midterm) * p< .10, ** p<.05, and *** p<.001. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. N is unweighted count, mean score is average weighted sum, and standard deviation is from weighted mean score.					

Baseline and Midterm mean scores for the reading comprehension subtask are presented in Table 7. Overall, learners were able to answer 0.33 reading comprehension questions correctly at midterm, an increase from 0.28 at baseline. Boys at midterm scored significantly higher than girls. Ultimately, however, the performance on this subtask remains very low.

Table 7: Reading Comprehension Mean Scores by Gender (Correct out of 5)

	Baseline		Midterm		
Gender	**N**	**Mean Score**	**N**	**Mean Score**	**Standard Error**
Boys**^	807	0.32	815	0.38	0.32
Girls**	842	0.24	827	0.28	0.24

Total**	1,649	0.28	1,642	0.33	0.02
Note: * denote significance level between timepoints (Baseline to Midterm) * p< .10, ** p<.05, and *** p<.001. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. N is unweighted count, mean score is average weighted sum, and standard deviation is from weighted mean score.					

The distribution of learners able to attempt and correctly answer reading comprehension questions is detailed in Table 8 and Table 9. At midterm nearly half of all learners (46.33 percent of girls and 40.20 percent of boys) did not attempt a single reading comprehension question.

Table 8: Distribution of Attempted Reading Comprehension Questions by Gender

	Baseline				Midterm			
Number of Questions Attempted	**Girls**	**Girls (%)**	**Boys**	**Boys (%)**	**Girls**	**Girls (%)**	**Boys**	**Boys (%)**
0	424	50.36%	344	42.63%	384	46.33	304	40.20
1	42	4.99%	56	6.94%	38	3.89	31	26.50
2	316	37.53%	336	41.64%	310	38.77	357	43.09
3	44	5.23%	50	6.20%	63	7.50	69	8.42
4	8	0.95%	18	2.23%	20	2.29	39	4.20
5	8	0.95%	3	0.37%	12	1.21	15	1.44
Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts.								

Consequentially, more than three-fourths of learners did not answer a single reading comprehension question correctly out of 5. However, there is some movement among those who were able to overcome the initial hurdle of answering one question correctly to correctly identifying two or three questions correctly. At baseline only 49 learners were able to answer three to five questions correctly, at midterm this increased to 72 learners. While this is marginal in the larger scheme of things, it does demonstrate some movement among learners who already had a baseline comprehension. At midterm, the proportion of girls who could answer the reading comprehension questions correctly was significantly lower than the boys.

Table 9: Distribution of Correct Reading Comprehension Questions by Gender

	Baseline				Midterm			
Number of Questions Correct	**Girls**	**Girls (%)**	**Boys**	**Boys (%)**	**Girls**	**Girls (%)**	**Boys**	**Boys (%)**
0	718	85.27%	646	80.05%	678	83.60	610	77.52
1	69	8.19%	97	12.02%	77	8.57	120	13.10
2	36	4.28%	44	5.45%	42	4.77	43	4.74
3	15	1.78%	13	1.61%	22	2.25	29	3.14
4	4	0.48%	7	0.87%	4	0.47	11	1.10
5	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	0.34	2	4.00

Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts

EGRA Scores and Portuguese Exposure

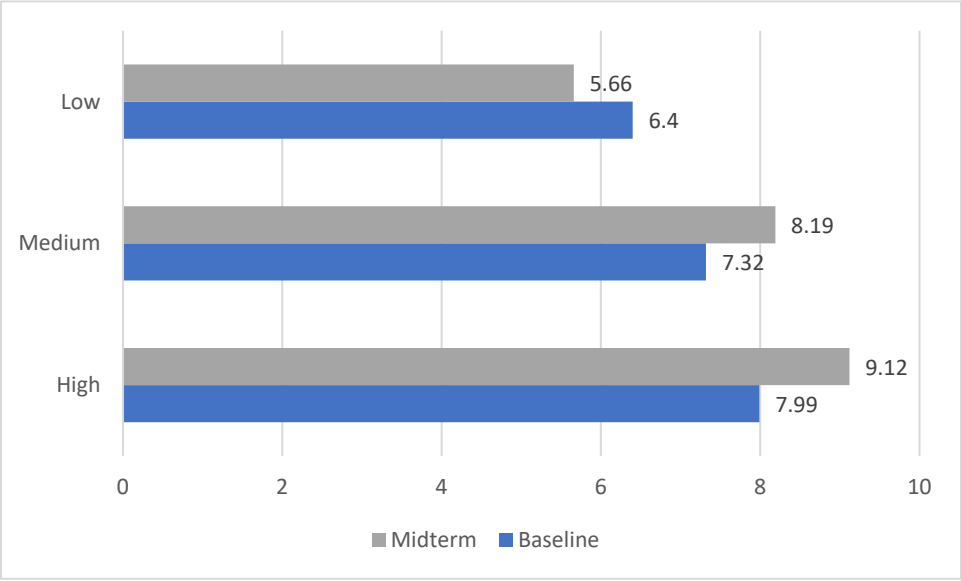
The relationship between EGRA performance and key language-related learner survey responses was examined. The three key learner survey questions which were examined in relation to EGRA performance were:

1. “What languages does your family use most at home?”
2. “Do your parents or caregivers speak Portuguese?”
3. “What languages does your teacher use most in the classroom?"

On two of the three questions (“Do your parents or caregivers speak Portuguese?” and “What languages does your teacher use most in the classroom?"), learners who answered “yes”/“Portuguese” had higher scores on all subtasks than those that did not, on average.

STS analyzed these variables alone and in groupings of exposure to Portuguese: “high” (3), “medium” (1-2), “low” (0). Using the index score, across all the groupings, learners with "high" exposure to Portuguese had, on average, higher scores on the oral reading fluency passage than "medium" and "low" exposure learners. "Medium" exposure learners had on average higher scores than "low" exposure learners on every subtask.

Figure 10: Oral Reading Fluency Scores by Level of Exposure to Portuguese.



At baseline there was a statistically significant difference between the mean letter fluency scores of boy and girl learners. There was also a significant difference in mean scores between groups of learners exposed to Portuguese. However, there was no statistically significant interaction found between gender and language exposure, meaning that this relationship did not affect boys and girls differently.

At midterm, we find that ORF scores are significantly increase as the score on the composite (i.e. their exposure to Portuguese increases).[35] There is not statistical difference between the average Portuguese language exposure score of boys and girls at midterm. Lastly, learners at midterm had significantly higher scores on this composite than at midterm (average = 1.93) than at baseline (average = 1.77).

Indicator 2: Improved Learner Attendance (IR 1.3)

At baseline[36] and midterm, school observations and director surveys were used to estimate learner attendance and enrollment.

School enrollment and attendance rate stayed the same at midterm. To calculate the average attendance rate, enrollment responses from the director survey and attendance responses from the school observation were merged and aggregated by gender across both pre-primary and primary (1-6) grades. These numbers were averaged over all schools and divided (attendance/enrollment) to calculate an attendance rate. Project targets set at baseline wanted to see a 75 percent average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools by year four of the project. While the midterm results do not meet this threshold, the difference is feasible between now and the end of project. However, the lack of growth since baseline would suggest a change in the quality or quantity of project interventions is necessary.

Table 10 displays the attendance rate by gender. Attendance and enrollment rates at midterm were similar to baseline values.

Table 10: Average Learner Attendance Rate in USDA Supported Classrooms/Schools

	Baseline			Midterm		
Gender	**Average Enrollment**	**Average Attendance**	**Attendance Rate**	**Average Enrollment**	**Average Attendance**	**Attendance Rate**
Boys	137.15	86.11	62.79%	132.33	84.31	63.71%
Girls	124.81	77.99	62.49%	129.7	79.44	61.24%
Total	261.46	166.74	63.77%	262.03	163.75	62.49%

Indicator 3: More Consistent Teacher Attendance (Sub-IR 1.1.1)

Teacher attendance rates increased at midterm among sampled schools. At baseline and midterm, School Directors were asked a series of questions about teacher attendance and documentation of teacher attendance at the school level. At baseline on the day of the interviews, 400 of 806 employed (49.63 percent) teachers were present. Overall, 54.42 percent of women teachers and 47.88 percent for men teachers were present on the day their school was interviewed. This increased at midterm where 63.60 percent of men teachers were present, and 63.45 percent of women teachers were present (62.36 percent in total). Project targets aimed to have teacher attendance at 70 percent by year four of the project. This significant increase from baseline to midterm suggests that this is possible with the continuation of current interventions.

[35] Significance test based on weighted regression (p<.001).

[36] At baseline only 79 project schools—or 87.78percent of the baseline EGRA sample—on the day of data collection.

Indicator 4: Increased Skills and Knowledge of School Administrators (Sub-IR 1.1.5)

At baseline and midterm, School Directors were asked several questions linked to the standard best practices for school management. Many of these techniques are likely to serve as the basis for the new tools and techniques that will be the focus of future CRS interventions. The goal of this indicator is to help the project understand the preexisting practices already in use by school administrators. Composite scores were created from the seven items collected with each activity receiving up to one point based on the quality and time spent utilizing the technique.[37]

At midterm, skills and knowledge composite scores among school directors decreased. At baseline, one-quarter (25 percent) of School Directors demonstrated between one and four activities while 75 percent of School Directors demonstrated more than four of the techniques or tools. At midterm, 67.77 percent of school directors demonstrated one to four activities and the remaining 32.22 percent only demonstrated five. While this is a decrease it remains above the target level of 50 percent by year four of the project. Raw frequency tables of responses are provided in Annex 2.

Table 11: Frequency of School Administration Knowledge Score (out of 7)

	Baseline		Midterm	
School Administration Knowledge Score	**# of Directors**	**Percentage**	**# of Directors**	**Percentage**
0	0	0.00%	0	0
1	0	0.00%	1	1.11%
2	7	3.26%	4	4.44%
3	6	4.20%	15	16.66%
4	19	17.72%	41	45.56%
5	30	34.97%	29	32.22%
6	25	34.97%	0	0
7	3	4.90%	0	0
Grand Total	**90**	**100.00%**	**90**	**100%**

Indicator 5: Reduced Health-Related Absences (Sub-IR 1.3.2)

Due to the constraints caused by school closures in the prior year, obtaining accurate data on learner health-related absences for the prior year was challenging. Instead, the baseline data collected was for

[37] The directors survey requested to provide data that would support daily operations for school administration. In cases where an item was skipped, the item score was treated as zero. Each question was equally weighted. This means that all activities were given a possible score of 1. While some items were treated as a binary yes or no, a number of questions used ordinal response items, asking the enumerator to rate the quality of an activity. In this case each question received a total possible score of 1, with each rating incrementally increasing in value from 0 (e.g., 1-4 will be transferred to .25, .5, .75, 1 respectively).

learner health-related absences in the past two weeks. To add comparable data, the same strategy was followed at midterm.

Rates of health-related absences remains similar at midterm as it was at baseline. At baseline, based on 79 school directors' responses, learners missed an average of 3.65 days of school in the two weeks prior to the school visit due to health issues, as shown in Table 12. At midterm, the average number of health-related absences from the previous two weeks remained relatively unchanged at 3.58. his is well below the project target of 10 days at year 4 of the project.

Table 12: Health-Related Absences

	Baseline	Midterm
Valid Responses	79	90[38]
Average Health-Related Absences	3.65	3.58
Maximum Health-Related Absence	20	21
Minimum Health-Related Absence	0	0

Indicator 6: Increased Community Understanding of the Benefits of Education (Sub-IR 1.3.5)

Project enrollment data provided by the project team shows an increase in enrollment (seen in Table 13). At midterm, the project documents that 41,101 girls are enrolled across the 350 project schools. Boys enrollment similarly increased to a total of 45,173 leaners enrolled at midterm. This is above the projects target of 82,889 learners enrolled by the end of year four.

Table 13: Project Enrollment by Gender

	Baseline Enrollment	Midterm Enrollment
Girls	37,404	41,101
Boys	41,384	45,173
Total	78,788	86,274

3.2 Intermediate Outcomes

At midterm, we analyzed learner responses to questions measuring teacher and caregiver support, child-centered processes, Educational Content and Teaching Methodology, and perceived safety of their learning environment. These factors likely contribute to a learner's' ability and likelihood of educational development. In analyzing this data, we can identify strengths and weaknesses within the classroom to inform project recommendations to further support growth in learning for the remainder of the project's duration. Note these questions were not asked at baseline.

Supportive Teachers

Teacher support is a vital classroom component of learning, and a lack of teacher support can hinder a child's educational development. Throughout the project, teacher trainings were conducted and

[38] Two schools reported absences great than 300. This was determined to be an error and removed during data cleaning. Fourteen School Directors said they did not know or refused to answer.

teaching tools were provided to increase teacher competencies in pedagogy, mathematics, and Portuguese.

Only a small portion of learners stated that their teacher(s) helps me all of the time when asked if their teacher helps them do better at school. At midterm only 15.71 percent of boys and 16.53 percent of girls state that their teachers helps them most or all the time. There is no statistical difference between perceived level of helpfulness between boys and girls.

However, **more than 30 percent state that teachers helps them all the time when a learner in the classroom is struggling or falling behind.** 35.52 percent of boys and 32.38 percent of girls state that teachers help them all the time if they are struggling. There difference between boys and girls is not statistically significant.

Table 14: Supportive Teachers

		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%
My teacher(s) helps me to do better at school.	Teacher(s) helps me	584	76.37	607	76.95
	Teacher(s) helps me some of the time	77	7.92	67	6.52
	Teacher(s) helps me most of the time	41	4.46	52	4.70
	Teacher(s) helps me all the time	113	11.25	101	11.83
When a learner in the classroom is struggling or falling behind, my teacher(s) tries to help them.	Teacher(s) helps learner	84	10.69	97	10.19
	Teacher(s) helps learner some of the time	385	41.85	386	45.38
	Teacher(s) helps learner most of the time	101	11.94	101	12.05
	Teacher(s) helps learner all the time	245	35.52	243	32.38

Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. * <.10 ** <.05 ***<.001

Supportive Caregivers

At midterm, the largest portion of learners state that their caregivers **sometimes** support them by **helping with their schoolwork, reading with them, and talking to their teacher about their performance at school.** Supportive caregivers are vital to learner's educational development and at midterm there remains room for growth on the frequency of involvement for caregivers. While no specific activities were developed for caregivers as part of the project, some of the caregivers were included in the teachers' training.

Notably, **the majority of learners caregivers do not speak the same language as the language of instruction at home (Portuguese).** Only 32.04 percent of boys and 31.53 percent of girls answered that their caregivers speak Portuguese at home. The difference between boys and girls is not statistically significant.

Table 15: Supportive Caregivers

		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%
My parents or caregivers ask me about my schoolwork.	Rarely	170	23.40	164	21.29
	Sometimes	384	44.55	400	47.95
	Most of the Time	74	7.87	61	5.85
	Always	187	24.18	202	24.91
Someone in my household reads to or with me	Rarely	218	29.66	221	26.23
	Sometimes	381	44.25	381	46.79
	Most of the Time	79	8.64	91	10.7
	Always	137	17.46	134	16.29
My parents/caregiver have talked to my teacher about my performance in school	Rarely	266	33.81	270	34.94
	Sometimes	384	46.24	403	48.04
	Most of the Time	60	6.04*	57	6.51
	Always	105	13.92	97	10.51
My parents/caregiver speak the same language as the language of instruction	No	537	67.96	558	68.47
	Yes	278	32.04	269	31.53

Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. * <.10 ** <.05 ***<.001

Child-Centered Processes

At midterm, **most learners stated that they sometimes engage in child-centered processes in the classroom.** Child centered processes in the classroom can be vital to supporting literacy development. There are no gender differences in the frequency which boys and girls engage in child-centered processes. Ideally, we would like to see learner's saying they engage in these processes most of the time or always.

Outside of the classroom, the project developed extracurricular activities to support children learning apart from the school environment.

Table 16: Child-Centered Processes

		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%
We work in small groups or pairs during class	Rarely	305	35.72	307	36.28
	Sometimes	415	52.19	435	53.67
	Most of the Time	32	2.90	31	3.26
	Always	63	9.20	54	6.79
My teacher(s) encourage me to ask questions at school.	Rarely	113	14.98	124	15.26
	Sometimes	368	41.45	359	41.08
	Most of the Time	102	10.92	102	11.67

	Always	232	32.65	242	31.99
We have time to practice new concepts in class (beyond simply listening to the teacher/ copying down notes).	Rarely	194	23.68	188	22.79
	Sometimes	414	50.16	422	49.64
	Most of the Time	88	9.03	84	10.47
	Always	119	17.13	133	17.10
Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. * <.10 ** <.05 ***<.001					

Educational Content and Teaching Methodology

The nature of the materials used in a classroom, their sentiment and representation, can also have a strong effect on learner's experience and development in the classroom. At midterm, **most learners said that their teachers tell positive stories about girls and boys and that their homework requires them to engage with their community sometimes.** And over 70 percent of learners said that what they are learning in schools helps them in their daily life quite a bit.

The project engaged with education content by supporting the development of teaching and learning materials in partnership with the National Institute for Education. These materials were provided to schools and utilized in teacher trainings.

Table 17: Learner Experiences with Positive Stories and Homework

		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%
My teacher(s) tells positive stories about girl characters, such as girls that are leaders.	Rarely	283	35.82	284	36.22
	Sometimes	398	47.77	429	50.66
	Most of the Time	48	5.38	33	3.66
	Almost Always	86	11.03	81	9.47
My teacher(s) tells positive stories about boy characters, such as boys that are leaders.	Rarely	263	34.85	277	35.52
	Sometimes	405	47.72	416	49.36
	Most of the Time	56	5.88	40	4.07
	Almost Always	91	11.55	94	11.04
My homework assignments require me to interact with my community (interview my community members, write stories about home, measure my family's farm plot for math, etc.)	Rarely	304	40.13	342	44.25
	Sometimes	370	40.58	348	39.44
	Most of the Time	63	6.82	45	4.52
	Almost Always	78	12.48	92	11.79
What I learn in school helps me in my daily life.	It does not Help me	28	3.63	35	3.75
	It helps me somewhat	46	4.74	51	4.55
	It helps me quite a bit	569	73.23	574	72.67

	It helps me very much	172	18.4	167	19.02
Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. * <.10 ** <.05 ***<.001					

Safe Learning Environment

At midterm, **learners report high levels of feeling safe travelling to and at school.** Safety and perceptions of safety can drastically impact learner's ability to learn. Nearly 80 percent of all learners feel quite safe travelling to and from school and while at school. Over 50 percent feel almost always welcomed at school. There are no gender differences in perceptions of safety.

Although the project did not implement a specific activity regarding safe learning environments, some awareness was raised during teacher trainings. In addition, a video is being produced to increase child and teacher awareness of child protection, which will be distributed at the community level in the future.

Table 18: Learner Perceptions of Safety

		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%
I feel safe traveling to and from school.	I do not feel safe	80	10.21	97	10.76
	I feel somewhat safe	32	3.35	38	4.38
	I feel quite safe	644	80.18	630	78.27
	I feel very safe	59	6.27	62	6.59
I feel safe at school.	I do not feel safe	54	7.05	61	6.67
	I feel somewhat safe	39	3.80	27	2.66
	I feel quite safe	645	80.96	660	82.09
	I feel very safe	77	8.19	79	8.57
I feel welcome at school.	Rarely	35	4.95	29	3.24
	Sometimes	214	21.92	219	23.55
	Most of the Time	194	21.19	182	20.86
	Almost Always	372	51.95	397	52.35
Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts. ^ denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. * <.10 ** <.05 ***<.001					

3.3 SO2: Increased use of improved health, nutrition, and dietary practices

The project's second SO seeks to increase the use of health, nutrition, and dietary practices by promoting health, nutrition, and personal hygiene initiatives within the schools and communities. At the midterm, we can evaluate the project's progress on increasing the use of improved health, nutrition,

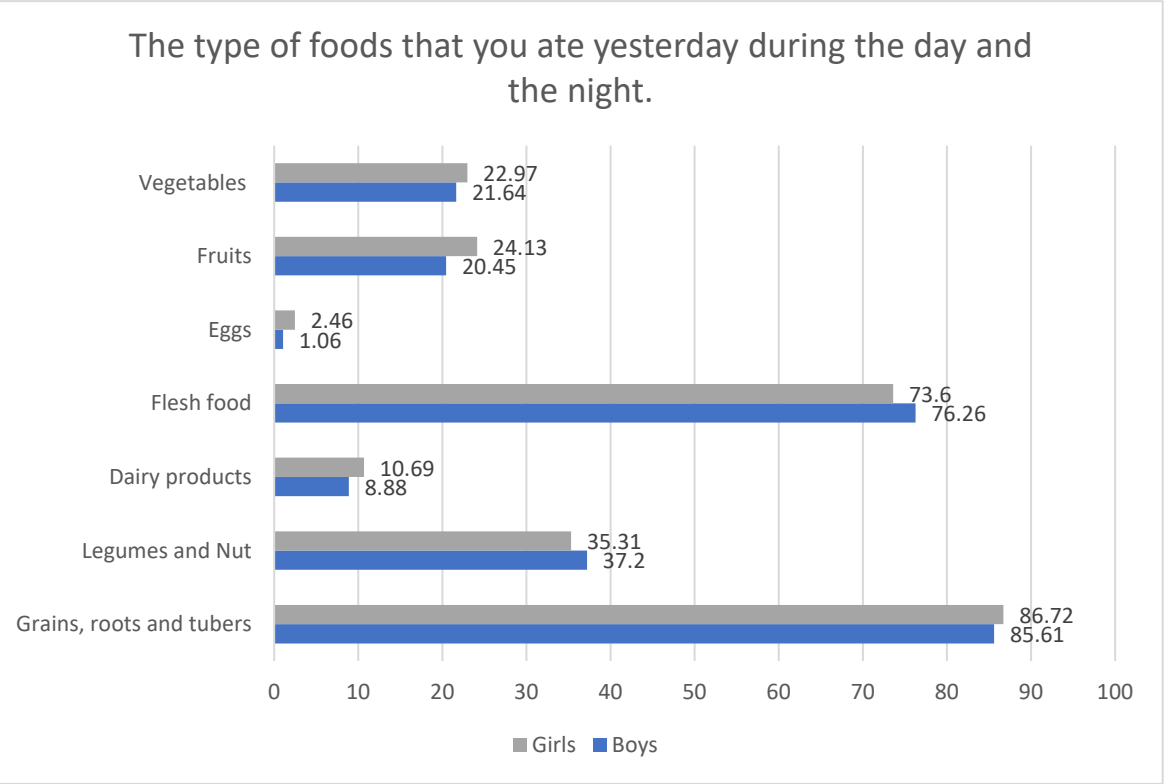
and dietary practices by looking at health focused questions in the learner survey and to inventories taken during the school observation.

Dietary Practices

Learners at midterm are rarely stating they are hungry. More than 75 percent of learners report that they in the last five days they were rarely hungry. At midterm, 81.72 percent of girls and 78.92 percent of boys said that in the last five days while at school, they were rarely hungry at school. Further internal project data reports that confirmed that food was served at each school on the day of the evaluation.[39] Lastly, three out of four learners stated they ate at least two different food groups the day before depicted in Figure 11. This question was not asked at baseline; therefore, no comparison data exists.

Qualitative reports from USDA and project internal monitor confirm that every school was receiving enough daily rations for all learners. Schools were saying they are receiving the correct volume to prepare a full ration for each student on a daily basis. A good number of students said it was their only meal of their day.[40]

Figure 11: Type of Foods Eaten at Midterm



[39] Note that the student survey questionnaire did ask students Have you been given/served food/meal in school yesterday?; Have you been given/served food/meal in school today?; and Are you given/served food/meal every day in the week at school?. However, responses were very low and at odds with internal monitoring data to suggest that potentially students we misinterpreting the questions.

[40] Interview Participant #6; March 16th, 2023

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

There appears equal and reliable access to latrines for both boys and girls. More than 50 percent of learner say that both the boys' and girls' latrines are always open during the school day.[41] Both boys and girls were asked whether students of each gender cleaned latrines. The results show that equal proportions of girls and boys reported that both groups help clean the latrines. However, girls are significantly more likely to state that boys rarely help clean the latrines (36.26 percent) in comparison to only 32.16 percent. A full breakdown of responses can be seen in Table 19.

Importantly, more than 65 percent of girls and boys state that latrines are accessible for both youngest and students with disabilities. There is a small and statistically significant gender gap with boys less likely to say that latrines are not accessible for both the youngest and students with disabilities.

Table 19: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene[42]

		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%
The girls' toilets/latrines in my school are open during the school day.	Rarely	69	8.71	66	8.52
	Sometimes	69	7.22	56	6.55
	Most of the Time	182	18.37	183	19.8
	Always	495	65.70	522	65.13
The boys' toilets/latrines in my school are open during the school day.	Rarely	76	8.93	76	9.73
	Sometimes	75	8.36	58	6.90
	Most of the Time	173	17.78	180	19.51
	Always	491	64.93	513	63.86
Girls help to clean the toilets/ latrines in my school.	Rarely	206	22.56	192	22.47
	Sometimes	357	45.97	394	46.35
	Most of the Time	77	7.83	78	9.14
	Always	175	23.64	163	22.04
Boys help to clean the toilets/ latrines in my school.	Rarely	304	32.16**	320	36.26
	Sometimes	340	44.18	348	42.53
	Most of the Time	49	5.48	46	5.86
	Always	122	18.18	112	15.35
Toilets/ latrines in my school are accessible for the youngest learners and those with disabilities	**NOT** accessible for youngest or students with disabilities	100	9.78**	106	11.66
	Accessible for youngest **OR** students with disabilities	224	21.68	204	23.03
	Accessible for **BOTH** youngest and	491	68.54	517	65.31

[41] All learners were asked this question. If it was not applicable to the learner because no latrine was available, the response was recorded as 999.

[42] It is important to note that the project did not include any activity to repair or build latrines.

	students with disabilities				
Note: Percentages reflect unweighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts. * denotes group scored significantly higher than other at midterm. * <.10 ** <.05 ***<.001					

More than two-thirds of the latrines observed on the day of school visits were pit latrines or buckets (67.78 percent) and of the 86 schools that had latrines available all of them were open to learner use that day. The full breakdown of responses can be seen in Table 20.

The project reports that students use the latrines that were built before the MeREECE project. The construction and rehabilitation of latrine facilities has not been included in project activities. As a mitigation measure, the field staff encourage PTAs to build latrines through community initiatives to foster hygiene practices at the schools. The project also established health clubs in 87 pilot schools to reinforce awareness about hygiene practices and the use of latrine facilities.

Table 20: Status of Toilets

		N	%
Toilets	No toilets available (only in the bush or in the fields).	4	4.44
	The toilets are pit latrines or buckets.	61	67.78
	The toilets are composting toilets.	25	27.78
Verify if the toilets are open/being used by learners today.	Yes	86	100
	No	0	0.00
State of the Toilets: • The toilets are clean • The toilets are separated by sex • There is at least one toilet per 50 boys and one toilet per 25 girls • The toilets are accessible to the most young • The toilets are accessible to learners with disabilities • There is one toilet, with water, for menstrual hygiene for the girls and one for the teachers	Zero conditions are met.	12	13.95
	One condition is met.	28	32.56
	Two conditions are met.	22	25.58
	Three or more conditions are met.	24	27.91
Note: Percentages reflect unweighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts.			

The average kitchen as observed kitchen has everything it needs to provide meals to all pupils (55.56 percent), with everything clean (75.56 percent), that is less than five minutes away (98.85 percent). A full breakdown of observations on school kitchens can be seen in Table 21.

The project reports that CRS organizes capacity strengthening trainings and refresher trainings for cooks on hygiene, food preparation and storage in 350 schools. The project provides cooking materials

including spoons, bowls, and aprons. Field staff conduct close monitoring of schools and raise awareness regarding clean kitchen management standards.

Table 21: Status of kitchen

		N	%
Is the kitchen well-equipped?	The kitchen has everything it needs to provide meals to all pupils.	50	55.56
	The kitchen mostly has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils. It could use additional supplies in one or two items.	12	13.33
	The kitchen has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in multiple items.	4	4.44
	The kitchen does not have everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in many items.	9	10.00
	The kitchen does not have the majority of the items it needs to provide meals to pupils.	15	16.67
Is the kitchen clean?	Everything in the kitchen is clean.	68	75.56
	Mostly everything in the kitchen is clean. One or two things could use further cleaning.	11	12.22
	Many things in the kitchen are clean. Three or four things could use further cleaning.	7	7.78
	The kitchen is not very clean. Many items could use further cleaning.	2	2.22
	The kitchen is not clean. The majority of items need cleaning.	2	2.22
How far away is the kitchen?	Less than 5-minute walk	86	98.85
	5–10-minute walk	1	1.15
	10–30-minute walk	0	0.00
	Greater than 30-minute walk	0	0.00
Note: Percentages reflect unweighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts.			

Seventy-six of the 90 schools had a storeroom (84.44 percent).[43] Of those, more than two-thirds were recorded as organized, cleaned, and has everything it needs to provide meals to all pupils. The full breakdown of responses can be seen in Table 22.

The project reports that it has provided storage support materials to school council members, PTAs, school officials and conducted trainings on storage minimum standards. A fumigation activity and

[43] The project reports that the existence of a warehouse was an eligibility requirement for schools to be included in the project. As such, the reported lack of a storeroom in some schools may have been due to a misunderstanding or mistranslation of the survey question.

monthly physical inventory have been conducted at the CRS central warehouse before food distribution calendar. Table 22: Status of Storeroom

		N	%
Does the school have a kitchen storeroom?	Yes[44]	76	84.44
	No	14	15.56
Is the storeroom clean?	Everything in the storeroom is clean.	56	76.71
	Mostly everything in the storeroom is clean. One or two things could use further cleaning.	10	13.70
	Many things in the storeroom are clean. Three or four things could use further cleaning.	4	5.48
	The storeroom is not very clean. Many items could use further cleaning.	2	2.74
	The storeroom is not clean. The majority of items need cleaning.	1	1.37
Is the storeroom well organized?	The storeroom has everything it needs to provide meals to all pupils.	57	78.08
	The storeroom mostly has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils. It could use additional supplies in one or two items.	7	9.59
	The storeroom has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in multiple items.	7	9.59
	The storeroom does not have everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in many items.	2	2.74
	The storeroom does not have the majority of the items it needs to provide meals to pupils.	0	0
Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts.			

The availability of drinking water could be improved upon. On the day of surveying, 38.89 percent of school had no water available at schools. The full breakdown of responses can be seen in Table 23.

The project reports that the construction and rehabilitation of water infrastructures was not included in project activities. Students utilized the pre-existing school water infrastructures. The water shortage in some schools was as major challenge that the project considers as requiring improvement.

Table 23: Status of Drinking Water

		N	%
A Drinking Water	No water available at school. Water, if present, is provided by parents, children, or staff.	35	38.89
	Available water is: Unprotected inground well / spring, untreated rainwater, surface water.	25	27.78
	Available water is a cart with a small tank / drum or a protected spring.	5	5.56
	The available source of sanitary water is running water, a public tap, treated rainwater, a protected dug well or bottled water.	25	27.78

[44] This reflects the combination of those that are yes and yes, but it is locked. Only three storerooms were locked.

Verify if the source is functional today	Yes	51	92.73
	No	4	7.27
Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts			

Handwashing practices could be improved. Nearly 20 percent of schools observed learner who did not wash their hands or fewer than 25 percent that do. And only 23.3 percent of school has almost of the learners engaging in proper hand washing. The full breakdown of responses can be seen in Table 24.

The project reports that, during the COVID-19 period, handwashing devices were purchased by the project and distributed in beneficiary schools with the aim of improving hygiene practices. Although the project does not include specific activities on WASH, these gaps will be addressed in future project implementation opportunities.

Table 24: Handwashing Practices

		N	%
Handwashing Practices	The learners don't wash their hands or fewer than 25% do	18	20.00
	Handwashing is sporadic (26-50%) OR more than 50% of children wash their hands but without soap or ash.	33	36.67
	51 to 75% of children wash their hands with soap or ash. There is a supportive handwashing system or process (teacher supervises, encourages, is part of routine, etc.)	18	20.00
	Almost all children (76% to 100%) wash their hands with soap or ash. There is a supportive handwashing system or process (teacher supervises, encourages, is part of routine, etc.)	21	23.33
Note: Percentages reflect weighted proportions, N reflect unweighted counts			

3.4 Project Research Questions

The questions below draw answers from both the quantitative findings above and also from additional qualitative data collection. It is important to note that the qualitative data should not be considered representative of the entire population, but only the communities sampled.

In total, seven individuals were contacted to participate in online forms of data collection. One remote KII was conducted with a USDA personnel and six online data collection forms were recorded from key stakeholders Guinea-Bissau.

Relevance

Participants in the qualitative data collection provided their opinions on the relevance of the project. Additionally, quantitative data on progress toward desired results also informs the evaluation of the project interventions' relevance.

To what extent do the project's interventions meet the educational, socio-economic, cultural, and political needs of beneficiaries?

Clear across the qualitative accounts is the relevance of this project to the meet the needs of the learners across the five regions. Participants agree that there are numerous barriers to education in

Guinea-Bissau that the project interventions address. These can be summarized into teacher quality, school infrastructure, and poverty.

The component of the project focusing on teacher training addresses a critical need. Poor quality of teacher training and preparation was highlighted across interviews as one of the reasons why the quality of education remains low across the regions. One respondent indicated that,"from my perspective, I see the quality of teaching in the regions of Oio, Cacheu, Bafata, Gabu and Quinara as worrying. However…improvements were achieved during the implementation of the MeREECE project." [45]

Specifically, the work behind strategic objective two responds to a vital component often overlooked in education improvement project: school infrastructure. As highlighted by a MeREECE project manager, "schools in these areas often suffer from a lack of infrastructure and resources, such as suitable school buildings, books, school supplies and equipment didactic. Thus, there is no suitable environment for correct learning.[46]" The quantitative data presented in this report further documents the relevance of the project in meeting local needs for school infrastructure improvement. There is a clear need for improved water access in schools in this region, a need that the project's theory of change accounts for to directly address.

Like many areas in which McGovern Dole projects take place, poverty is a major obstacle to learners' education. School attendance is more than just the cost of enrollment and participation that may be originally thought of when trying to understand the financial resources necessary to support a child's school. Rather, it is the lost opportunity cost from a child's participation in other economic activities, such as agriculture. This is underscored by a project manager: "Poverty is a major obstacle to education in the regions of Oio, Cacheu, Quinara, Bafata and Gabu. Many children cannot go to school because they have to work to help their families support themselves. They don't have enough time to learn at home after leaving school."[47] The school feeding component of this project responds to this need by providing a tangible and daily benefit to learners who can attend school. In doing so, it relieves a small financial burden from families that might allow greater ability to send their children to school.

To what extent are project interventions aligned with the education strategy outlined in the Guinea-Bissau Education Sector Plan (2017-2025)?

Qualitative reports note that fluidity and tension remains between national level education policy and pragmatic realities in the classroom. One participant referred to this as "the curricula harmonization process.[48]" For example, the official language of instruction is Portuguese, and therefore curriculum development and instruction is not allowed in Creole. This is at odds with the reality that Creole is commonly spoken and used widely.[49] As one respondent indicates, "Portuguese is the official language of instruction in Guinea-Bissau, but many children do not speak it this language at home. This fact can make learning difficult and discourage children from attending the school. Portuguese is only spoken at school, so it becomes a little difficult for these children improve your language skills.[50]" The quantitative data in

[45] Interview Participant #1, May 15th 2023
[46] Interview Participant #3; May 15th 2023
[47] Interview Participant #3; May 15th, 2023
[48] Interview Participant #5; May 17th, 2023
[49] Interview Participant #6; May 16th, 2023
[50] Interview Participant#3; May 15th, 2023

the report underscores the importance of this debate. Exposure to Portuguese is highly correlated with higher literacy scores on the EGRA assessment. The very low reading comprehension rates indicate that students may be exposed to other languages, such as creole, more often the Portuguese.

Local project implementers underscored that the government has a responsibility to align its policies to increase learning. "As part of the Government's obligations to provide quality education (teaching) to all, the government must create government policies and programs aimed at improving the teaching and learning of Guinean children.[51]" The qualitative data highlights that the project alone cannot reach the level of improvement in education desired without the government aligning its education policy. "The improvement in the quality of education that we all can wish for does not depend specifically on the implementation of the project, but rather on an updated education policy adapted to the reality of the country and the world."

Are stakeholders satisfied with their participation in the project? Why or why not?

The accounts from key stakeholders suggest that the project could increase its engagement with the government. As stated by one participant: "In my opinion, I think that there should be more engagement by the Government of Guinea-Bissau and national and international partners in issues related to education."[52] This aligns with the discussion above regarding the alignment of national education, but also extends to their collaboration on teacher trainings. One participant recommended that the project "train the technical staff of the Ministry of Education in order to organize training [and that] retraining continues to the old teachers and the new entrants of different levels.[53]" Additionally, one participant suggested that, in addition to collaborating with the Ministry of Education, the CRS project team could work with the Ministry of Health.[54]

Effectiveness

Primarily investigated through the quantitative evaluation and the change analysis conducted between baseline and midterm, the report reflects on the effectiveness of the project with support for qualitative accounts.

To what extent has the project achieved its goals and targets (including increasing enrollment, retaining girls, reducing dropouts, reducing hunger in schools, improving teacher and student attendance)?

A comparison of results against the program's targets throughout this report informs the evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

The project has been successful in reaching well above (as reflected in less than the 10-day average) on Indicator 5: Reduced Health-Related Absences (Sub-IR 1.3.2), with the average number of days being less than four. Additionally, results show that observables are above target on Indicator 4: Increased Skills and Knowledge of School Administrators (Sub-IR 1.1.5), despite a decrease since baseline.

On Indicator 2: Improved Learner Attendance (IR 1.3), the project is below target, and there was no significant observable growth between baseline and midterm. Teacher attendance (Indicator 3: More

[51] Interview Participant #1; May 15th, 2023
[52] Interview Participant #1; May 15th, 2023
[53] Interview Participant #1; May 15th, 2023
[54] Interview Participant #7; May 19th, 2023

Consistent Teacher Attendance (Sub-IR 1.1.1), while not at the year 4 target, is growing significantly enough to suggest the project will meet this target by the end of the project. Currently, midterm results fall well below target on Indicator 1: Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction (IR 1.1). Practically, there is no realistic path to meet this benchmark by the end of the project. It is advised to revise this project target if the project remains to evaluate learners' proficiency in the language of instruction.

Which interventions contributed most significantly to the expected results or objectives?

Without an experimental approach that controls for confounders and isolated individual treatments, it is impossible to determine if an intervention had a causal effect. However, the quantitative results provide a compelling argument that literacy scores have been improved. Potentially contributing to this is the success of the school feeding program and the improvements in school infrastructure. As one qualitative account stated, "CRS in Guinea-Bissau is implementing a school canteen program enviable or otherwise never seen so far, specifically in my region.[55]" Additionally, measures to increase teacher attendance have been successful and greater teacher attendance likely had a positive effect on literacy.

To what extent does the project coordinate and collaborate with other stakeholders?

Qualitative accounts highlighted the numerous stakeholders with whom the project engages to achieve growth on both strategic objective one and strategic objective two. Expanding far greater than just the classroom, the project takes a holistic approach by engaging with the government, the local community, and with educators. Interviews highlighted the work the project has done through the creation of school boards and addressing the role of economic hardships of families and education as a particularly vital component of the work.[56]

Efficiency

To what extent have project resources (inputs) achieved the intended results?

Without a counterfactual, it is not possible to attribute any changes in educational and health outcomes to the project. However, this report conducts statistical analysis to test the differences among learners in schools between baseline and midterm, and ultimately finds significant increases on mean scores of all subtasks. However, overall literacy levels fall well below targets.

It is important to note teacher training, recruitment, and turnover are clear barriers to efficiency in reaching project targets that exist largely outside of the control of the implementers. Teacher strikes caused academic interruptions. As this report documents, teacher attendance is not at optimal levels, and the government's decision not to increase the number of teachers in the country further expands the teacher to student ratio. Teacher training and capacity development can only be successful if the trained teacher remains in the classroom with the ability to engage with all of their learners. One participant recommends to "seek advocacy strategies with the Ministry of National Education to minimize transfer constants of teachers and changes of directors of Schools to combat turnover that undercuts current training efforts."

Could the achieved would have been obtained with fewer resources or alternative approaches?

[55] Interview Participant #7; May 19th, 2023
[56] Interview Participant #1; May 15th, 2023

No clear alternate implementation strategies emerged through this study. However, the qualitative data highlights a potential population that may not have been fully utilized by the project: learner's older siblings. A project manager discussed how working with older children to support the younger learner's literacy development can be an under-utilized strategy. "This adopted strategy consists of placing families at the center of their children's education."[57]

The results suggest that an amplification, rather than a reduction, of resources is necessary to meet the benchmarks set by the closing of the project.

Sustainability

1. *What progress has been made to reach the sustainability milestones presented in the graduation and sustainability plan document?*
2. *Is there evidence of community capacity to take ownership of project activities and are they meeting their commitments outlined in their MOUs (providing wood, cooks, complementary foods for meals, staple foods for 2-4 days coverage per month, etc.)? Are there any spontaneous actions that APEs/COGES have taken to maintain/improve school infrastructures?*

Interview data with USDA personnel highlights the role of inflation in preventing local communities from fully taking ownership of school feeding programs. Specifically, domestic costs are increasing much faster and higher than on US donated commodities. Therefore, meeting the daily diet recommendations through locally and regionally procured goods is becoming more expensive than procuring internationally. This ultimately means that, unless budgets are raised, schools will be priced out of purchasing locally.

Impact

This section summarizes the project's overall impact, and notably interrelated unforeseen positive and negative consequences of increased school enrollment and attendance.

What were the expected and unintended positive and negative effects of the intervention on children, communities, and institutions? How does the intervention affect the well-being of different groups of stakeholders, including the most vulnerable and at-risk children?

Increased enrollment has the unpreventable consequence of increasing the demand for classroom and teacher resources at schools. Without increasing textbooks, desks, and other classroom materials equivalently, this means that any increase in enrollment by the program will expand the ratio of learners per resource. Further, with government freezes on teacher hiring, this means that increased enrollment and attendance will inevitably expand the teacher student ration increasing class sizes.

Further, increased enrollment will likely influence the economics and domestic labor of households. Children often participate in household work or in agricultural production. Their increased attendance in school will pull them away from these responsibilities ultimately impacting families. It is possible that this will disproportionately affect girls and women in the home who may be expected to bear the majority of this burden.

[57] Interview Participant #3; May 15th, 2023

Project interviewees did not believe there were any concerns about theft or security around project materials and goods.

What do beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in the project perceive as the effects of the intervention on themselves?

No participants reflected on the effects the project directly had on them outside of the bounds of their employment.

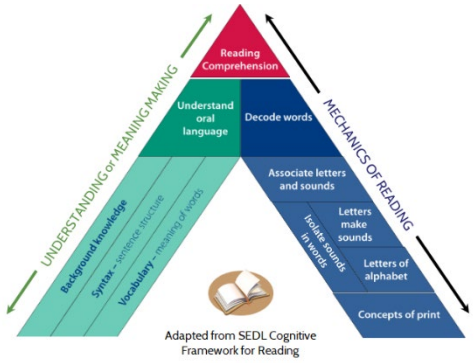
4. Conclusions

4.1 Evaluation Findings

The main objective of the midterm evaluation was to assess and report on the situation in the five target regions during the MeREECE interventions. The midterm sought to examine and provide feedback on the implementation of program, as well as determine the extent of the results achieved. The midterm evaluation furthermore assessed progress on the implementation of project activities using the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact; analyzed initial effects of the program; and identified obstacles to achieving results. Midterm findings also documented lessons learned and provided recommendations for continued management and operations. By comparing the results of baseline and endline evaluations to this study, stakeholders will be able to examine the impact of the MeREECE activity on the learners' reading skills, as measured by the EGRA subtasks. Using SEDL's Cognitive Framework for Reading, it is possible to map EGRA subtasks to reading skills as follows:[58]

- Mechanics of Reading
    - Initial Sound Identification
    - Letter Name Identification
    - Familiar Word Reading
- Reading Understanding
    - Oral Reading Fluency Reading Passage
- Reading Comprehension
    - Reading Comprehension

Figure 12: Reading Skills Framework from SEDL



On average, learners responded to 0.78 out of five items on the initial sound identification subtask. Moreover, nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of learners did not identify a single initial sound correctly, receiving a "zero score" for the subtask. On the letter name identification subtask, learners correctly identified 26.47 letters within two minutes, on average. This was also the subtask that had the highest participation rate—92 percent of learners correctly named at least one letter and only 12 percent received zero scores. For familiar word reading, learners averaged 4.65 words in one minute. The proportion of

[58] https://sedl.org/reading/framework/framework.pdf

zero scores was also similar on these subtasks at 49 percent. All of these scores have improved from baseline.

Combined, these four subtasks speak to learners' understanding of and abilities within the mechanics of reading. They are often necessary building blocks that learners must master to move ahead in their reading comprehension. Literacy and reading instruction in the early grades—including those targeted by the MeREECE project—often focus predominately on these skills. Grade 3 learners within the midterm sample still show ample area to improve their skills in these areas, especially when considering the large proportion of zero scores associated with three of the subtasks.

The reading passage is a measure of learners' understanding of meaning making from reading. It, along with the mechanics of reading, provide the foundation for reading comprehension. On the reading passage subtask, learners read at a rate of 9.92 words per minute on average; however, more than one-third (41 percent) of learners received zero scores on this subtask. Like the mechanics of reading, fluency should be targeted in the early grades to ensure that learners build a strong foundation for literacy.

The final subtask, reading comprehension, speaks to learners' ability to utilize the mechanics of reading, demonstrate fluency, and understand what the passage is about. As comprehension is often the purpose of reading, this subtask pulls on all of the other skills learners demonstrated in the previous subtasks. Unsurprisingly, this is also the subtask where Grade 3 learners within this evaluation struggled the most. On average, learners did not answer a single reading comprehension question. Nearly three out of four learners (72 percent) received zero scores and the average number of questions correctly answered was only 0.33.

At midterm, school observations and director surveys were used to estimate learner attendance and enrollment in 79 project schools. On average, 84.31 boys and 79.44 girls were in attendance on the day of data collection. Total attendance rate was 62.46 percent. This is like what was observed at baseline.

In addition to the learner assessment and learner survey, enumerators also surveyed School Directors. School Directors were asked a series of questions about teacher attendance and displayed documentation regarding teacher attendance. On the day of the interviews, 64 percent of men teachers and 63 percent of women teachers were present: a notable increase from baseline.

Enumerators also asked the School Directors questions linked to the "use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance." Enumerators looked for seven specific techniques or tools based on criteria checklists by MoE Inspectors on behalf of CRS. The indicator is managed by Partner Plan International under the supervision and validation of CRS. The baseline value is 0 and comparison is made with respect to the project target. At midterm, 67.77 percent of school directors demonstrated one to our activities and the remaining 32.22 percent only demonstrated 5.

Additionally, enumerators asked the School Directors about learner health-related absences. Based on responses from 79 School Directors, learners missed an average of 3.58 days of school during the two weeks preceding the evaluation due to health issues. This is similar to what was observed at baseline.

Baselines were established for Strategic Objectives as the majority of the observations could not be conducted at baseline due to safety procedures for COVID-19. The evaluation finds through project monitoring and qualitative accounts that learners are receiving daily meals through the school feeding programs. Regarding school infrastructure, there appears to be equal and reliable access to latrines for both boys and girls. Most schools had clean and accessible kitchens and storerooms. Where there remains much room for improvement is in access to drinking water and hand washing practices. On the day of

surveying, 38.89 percent of schools had no drinking water available at schools. School observers in 20 percent of schools less than 25 percent of students washed their hands. The project has not included an activity to build or rehabilitate water infrastructure as of the midterm evaluation. However, it is important to highlight this infrastructural limitation when it comes to the health of the students and their experience wile at school.

4.2 Lessons Learned

With the additions of new questions at midterm along with the change analysis conducted against baseline, the evaluations present multiple lessons learned for the project:

1. **Current project interventions to support literacy are not having the desired effect necessary to reach project goals.**

   While learning levels did significantly improve in some subtasks, we observed both backsliding on lower-level literacy skills along with stagnant growth in others. Given the time span of the project intervention it suggests a new approach be incorporated (recommendations are provided in the following section).

2. **Exposure to Portuguese in and out of the classroom is directly related to higher literacy levels**.

   This finding was established at baseline and further solidified at the midterm.

3. **The project's work on increasing infrastructure for kitchens, storerooms, and latrines has been successful.**

   Future work on this should be focused on either maintenance or by focusing interventions to improve storerooms, kitchens, and latrines on the small number of schools that are observed to be low-preforming on these measures.

4. **The project's work on increasing access to water has not had the desired effect.**

   Resources should be directed to support close to one-third of schools that were observed to have no access to water at the school.

5. **Safety concerns are not a driving factor in low attendance rates.**

   Learners report at very high levels that they are quite safe travelling to school. Therefore, when looking to explain low rates of attendance it is not likely that safety is playing a role.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Evaluation Recommendations

The student survey should consider adding the following measures to further explore puzzles uncovered at midterm:

- The evaluation should look to understand how low teacher attendance affects students. It is possible, and probably, that development of literacy skills is being hindered by low rates of teacher attendance. Additionally, factors driving student attendance should be investigated.
- Further, the evaluation should investigate if there is there a misunderstanding of the questions surrounding food consumption. The juxtaposition of the survey data and project monitoring suggests that students are not understanding when asked if they ate today, yesterday, and across the week.

The school observation should consider adding the following measures:

- To further investigate the puzzle of the food consumption questions, a question can be added to measure if they observe meals.

When asking to the school directors, new questions are recommended:

- School directors can be used to triangulate across school observations and the student surveys to understand the experience of the school feeding program.
- It is possible that both teacher and school director turnover is playing a role in many of the trends, like the decrease in knowledge and skills among school administrators, that were identified at midterm. Therefore, questions should be developed and added to the school director form to measure both director and teacher turnover across the time period of the project.
- At midterm, we see a stark reduction in the percentage of school directors who demonstrated five or more indicators of skills and knowledge. It is important to understand if this is the result of changing practices that are not captured in the current forms of measurement (i.e. they are engaging in new practices that demonstrate skills and knowledge but are not captured in the survey). If it is the former, the tools should be updated at endline.
- School directors could be asked to identify factors that drive teacher attendance and if these factors have changed in the last year. This data will help us understand changing levels of teacher attendance as seen between baseline and midterm.

Classroom observation protocol could be expanded to include the following:

- The role of Portuguese exposure and fluency is a notable finding at midterm. This can be further explored by understanding how much of classroom conversation is being done in local languages or in the official language of instruction.

5.2 Project Recommendations

Consider seriously the low number of learners who, at the end of second grade, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade-level text**.**

The change analysis between baseline and midterm literacy scores suggests that large changes need to be made to interventions directed towards growth on strategic objective one. More instructional time during the day needs to be devoted to reading in school. And this reading needs to be done in Portuguese. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to collaborate across subjects in order to

incorporate reading into other subjects such as mathematics. For example, word problems written in Portuguese would help increase the amount of instructional time learners spend reading during the day. Another strategy to increase time during the day reading would be to engage with parents and guardians to encourage reading in Portuguese in the home. For households who are fluent in Portuguese, co-reading should be integrated into daily home habits. In households where parents or guardians are not comfortable using Portuguese, dual language materials including both Portuguese and local language translation could be created to support reading in the home. The project did, in fact, establish a library in each of 50 project schools with materials in both Portuguese and Creole. However, adding reading materials in a local dialect could also be beneficial. A large component of reading fluency and comprehension is vocabulary. Teacher trainings, materials, and instructional time should prioritize vocabulary in Portuguese. Materials could be developed in both local languages and in Portuguese to support this development both within the classroom and at home, if provided to families.

Examine the Portuguese language abilities of learners and teachers.

Overall learner performance may indicate that learners have a limited ability to understand spoken Portuguese. Learners who had higher exposure to Portuguese in the home did score better on the oral reading fluency subtask (reported in findings section). Evaluation recommendations have been provided above to measure this in the next phase of the project. On the project side, teacher training need to both should both document the level of fluency and degree of comfort teachers have with Portuguese, but more importantly emphasize the importance of teaching literacy skills in the official language of instruction. Training materials should highlight the importance of using the official language of instruction, but also provide resources for teachers who may not demonstrate mastery of the language. In areas were lower-level fluency with Portuguese among teacher is high, the project should consider producing materials in two languages: Portuguese and the local language.

Examine gender constraints within target communities.

The gender gap in scores on the EGRA between girls and boys deserves further exploration and may warrant a specific focus within the project to address underlying causes of these gender disparities although it is not uncommon among this age group in the region. Projects in Sierra Leone and Togo also documented lower literacy scores between girls and boys across the evaluation period. In this project, girls scored significantly lower on the EGRA than boys and baseline and at midterm. Interestingly though, no major gender differences were uncovered when analyzing learner responses to any of the intermediate outcomes analyzed at midterm. This suggests that the gender gap may be more foundational and require the project to focus on the underlying structures of girls' education in target communities. For example, research suggests that girls may be less likely to guess or be more anxious when test taking and this lack of confidence during evaluation could also potentially be driving the gender gap as testing anxiety can result in lower scores on assessments. One potential strategy to overcome this is by engaging with girls to build their self-esteem and confidence both within and outside of the classroom.

Explore the decrease in skills and knowledge composite scores among school directors.

At midterm, we see a stark reduction in the percentage of school directors who demonstrated five or more indicators of skills and knowledge. It is possible that either due to turnover or attrition that the interventions done by the project early on are no longer having the effect originally observed. Specifically, it possible that the teachers who participated in the trainings no longer work in project schools or due to the duration since the training have forgotten some of the material. Encouragingly, the baseline

evaluation suggests those interventions were successful. Therefore, it is recommended that the project simply re-implement and refresh school directories by re-doing this training.

Project structural interventions should focus on improving access to drinking water.

Access to drinking water was low at surveyed schools. While other infrastructural components like kitchens, storerooms, and latrines appeared accessible and functional, drinking water was primarily only available if it had been provided by parents. The project should prioritize this in the next phase. The evaluation would suggest that the project should focus on 35 schools where no water access of any guide was observed. In these cases, digging wells would provide long term access. There is currently no infrastructure observed to be rehabilitated.

Encourage proper sanitation practices in target communities.

Proper hand washing practices were not commonly observed at midterm. The project might want to consider incorporating educational content on this topic to promote best sanitation practices. Other projects STS has been involved with have provided posters near handwashing facilities that consisted of imagery demonstrating best practices that were successful.

Identify drivers of teacher attendance increase and institutionalize project practices.

Teacher attendance significantly increased at midterm. Women's attendance increased from 54 percent at baseline to 63 percent. Men's attendance increased from 48 percent at baseline to 64 percent. Project practices such as the training of 1,003 teachers during 2022, that focused on teacher attendance likely contributed to this increase and should be institutionalized to sustain it. Further discussion with project teachers may want to investigate the most impactful project activities as they relate to discouraging absenteeism (currently the evaluation does not include teachers). It is also quite possible that resolutions made after the teachers' strike are a driving factor in this increase for teacher attendance. The project should see if any of the grievances made by leaders of this strike were resolved and if so how. Further, if any remain unresolved, depending on the nature of the grievance, the project could dedicate resources to them for teachers within project schools. There remains room for growth with close to one out of every three teachers being absent on the day of the evaluation.

Annexes

Annex 1: Items for Increased Skills and Knowledge of Teachers

At midterm, 87 classroom teachers were observed to gain an understanding of their knowledge of good instructional practices and teaching techniques. Enumerators were asked to observe classrooms looking for 12 specific teaching activities. Composite scores were then created, with each activity receiving up to one point based on the quality and time spent utilizing the technique.[59] Most teachers (95.37 %) demonstrated between one and six of the teaching behaviors while 4.45 percent of teachers demonstrated more than six of the teaching behaviors. Raw frequency tables for each activity are provided below Table 25.

Table 25: Frequency of Quality Teacher Score (out of 12)

	Baseline		Midterm	
Quality Teacher Score	**# of Classrooms**	**Percentage**	**# of Classrooms**	**Percentage**
1	1	1.12%	0	0.00%
2	3	3.37%	3	3.44%
3	9	10.11%	23	26.43%
4	15	16.85%	28	32.18%
5	12	13.48%	22	25.28%
6	15	16.85%	7	8.04%
7	14	15.73%	0	0.00%
8	17	19.10%	1	1.15%
9	2	2.25%	3	3.40%
10	1	1.12%	0	0.00%
11	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
12	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Grand Total	**89**	**100.00%**	**87**	**100.00%**

- Learning opportunities to support the development of math skills (number sense, time)
- Check if the teacher refers to a lesson plan to structure their math teaching
- Learning opportunities to support the development of literacy skills
- Check if teacher refers to a lesson plan to structure their literacy teaching
- Learning opportunities to develop expressive language skills. These are conversations that take place between the teachers and children throughout the observations. Conversations can occur during lessons, or in between lessons (while transitioning from one activity to another; during free play, etc.).
- Check if the teacher is speaking in the language of instruction

[59] The classroom observations observed both math and literacy activities. In cases where an item was skipped, the item score was treated as zero. Each question was equally weighted. This means that all activities were given a possible score of 1. While some items were treated as a binary yes or no, a number of questions used ordinal response items, asking the enumerator to rate the quality of an activity. In this case each question received a total possible score of 1, with each rating incrementally increasing in value from 0 (e.g., 1-4 will be transferred to .25, .5, .75, 1 respectively).

- Book reading to support children's listening and speaking skills
- Learning opportunities to promote fine motor skills
- Learning opportunities that allow children to engage in gross motor activities
- Learning activities that promote free play or open choice
- Learning opportunities that allow children to engage in Music/Movement activities
- The teacher provides some individualized instruction to children

Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Teacher provides some individualized instruction to children		
Teacher: •shows NO awareness that some children have different needs and abilities •uses a one-size fits all approach where all children do the same work and receive the same instruction and support • ignores child who struggles • makes no adaptations for children with special needs).	5	5.7
Teacher: •occasionally shows awareness of individual needs of children by checking for understanding of concepts and providing minimal support.	51	58.6
Teacher: •Looks for children who are having difficulty and gives them help (with or without specific requests for help) •looks for children who are not challenged and gives them developmentally appropriate activities or questions to keep them engaged.	19	21.8
Teacher: •Looks for children who are having difficulty and gives them help (with or without specific requests for help) • Looks for children who are not challenged and gives them developmentally appropriate activities or questions to keep them engaged	12	13.8
Total	87	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Check if teacher refers to a lesson plan to structure their math teaching		
Yes	49	100
Total	49	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Check if teacher refers to a lesson plan to structure their literacy teaching		
Yes	44	100
Total	44	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Learning opportunities that allow children to engage in Music/Movement activities		
No music/movement activity is observed.	79	90.8
At least one music or movement activity occurred during observation	8	9.2
Total	87	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Learning opportunities that allow children to engage in gross motor activities		
No gross motor activity is observed	81	93.1
Less than 10 minutes of gross motor activity is observed or only a few children participate.	3	3.4
Less than 20 minutes of gross motor activity is observed OR less than half of children participate.	1	1.1
Most children engage in at least 20 minutes of gross motor activity	2	2.3
Total	87	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**

Learning opportunities to promote fine motor skills such as writing drawing/painting		
	70	80.5
	3	3.4
	8	9.2
	2	2.3
	4	4.6
Total	87	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Learning opportunities to support development of math skills number		
No math activities was observed.	42	48.3
The teacher teaches math concepts ONLY in: â€¢ Repetitive activities. Examples include group response to closed-ended questions (such as counting to ten); individual children using a pointer to name numbers; write or copy numbers	26	29.9
Teacher teaches math concepts by using ONE of the following strategies: •Children explore and play with concrete objects to learn concept • Children have some choice in how to carry out an activity • Teacher engages children in discussion, and sometimes uses open-ended questions • Teacher connects lesson to real-life or every-day experiences	9	10.3
Teacher teaches math concepts by using TWO OR MORE of the following strategies: • Children explore and play with concrete objects to learn concept • Children have some choice in how to carry out an activity •Teacher engages children in discussion, and sometimes uses open-ended questions• Teacher connects lesson to real-life or every-day experiences	10	11.5
Total	87	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Book reading to support children listening and speaking skills		
	17	19.5
	16	18.4
	25	28.7
	29	33.3
Total	87	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Check if teacher is speaking in the language of instruction		
Yes	71	100
Total	71	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Learning opportunities to develop expressive language skills.		
Children are never or rarely invited to tell a story, describe events or objects, or answer any questions throughout the entire observation.	17	19.5
Teacher encourages expressive language skills ONLY by: •Repetitive activities. Examples include group response to close-ended questions (such as asking children to repeat a story or phrases word by word); individual children using a pointer to repeat words or sentences; individual responses to rote or close-ended questions.	41	47.1
Teacher encourages expressive language skills by using ONE verbal exchange activity, such as: •Asking children to describe objects (e.g., color, shape, size, function) or pictures; •Encouraging children to tell stories or describe events	18	20.7

•Show and tell •Telling a story and asking children two or more open-ended questions about the story •Repeating and extending what child says, and including more advanced vocabulary Using story telling or discussion to encourage vocabulary that draws connections to the children lives and experiences.		
Teacher encourages expressive language skills using TWO OR MORE verbal exchange activities, such as: •Asking children to describe objects (e.g., color, shape, size, function) or pictures; •Encouraging children to tell stories or describe events; •Show and tell •Telling a story and asking children two or more open-ended questions about the story •Repeating and extending what child says, and including more advanced vocabulary •Using story telling or discussion to encourage vocabulary that draws connections to the children lives and experiences.	11	12.6
Total	87	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Learning activities that promote free play or open choice		
No free choice/open play activity is observed.	81	93.1
•Teacher chooses where or how children will play with materials •Teacher provides limited choices for activity •children must play with materials in a prescribed way.	2	2.3
Children have ONE opportunity to choose their own activity, where and how they play with materials BUT Teacher does not interact to add to children play or extend learning	3	3.4
Children have ONE or more opportunities to choose their own activity and where and how they play with materials •Teacher interacts to add to children play or extend learning.	1	1.1
Total	87	100
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Learning opportunities to support development of literacy skills		
No literacy activities are observed	47	54
Teacher teaches literacy concepts ONLY by: •Repetitive activities. Examples include group response to close-ended questions (such as singing the alphabet, repeating letter sounds); individual children using a pointer to name letters; writing or copying letters	25	28.7
Teacher teaches literacy concepts by using ONE of the following strategies: •Children explore and play with concrete objects to learn concept •Children have some choice in how to carry out an activity •Teacher engages children in discussion, and sometimes uses open-ended questions •Teacher connects lesson to real-life or every-day experiences	7	8
Teacher teaches literacy concepts by using TWO OR MORE of the following strategies: •Children explore and play with concrete objects to learn concept •Children have some choice in how to carry out an activity •Teacher engages children in discussion, and sometimes uses open-ended questions •Teacher connects lesson to real-life or every-day experiences	8	9.2
Total	87	100

Annex 2: Items for Increased Skills and Knowledge of Administrators

School directors were asked the following questions:

- Do you track the reason for a learner's absence from school in the school registrar?
- Is there a school improvement plan?
- Do teachers have a weekly work plan or lesson plan for each subject?
- Do you review the lesson plan and provide feedback each week?
- How often do schools administrators summarize or compile school metrics?
- Does the school have a time book for recording daily teacher attendance?
- How often are teachers trained or do they meet to discuss best teaching practice?

In cases where an item was skipped, the item score was treated as zero. Each question was equally weighted. This means that all activities were given a possible score of 1. While some items were treated as a binary yes or no, a number of questions used ordinal response items, asking the enumerator to rate the quality of an activity. In this case each question received a total possible score of 1, with each rating incrementally increasing in value from 0 (e.g., 1-4 will be transferred to .25, .5, .75, 1 respectively).

Do you track the reason for a learner absence from school in the school register		
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
No	5	5.6
Yes	83	92.2
Don't know/No response	2	2.2
Total	90	100
Is there a school improvement plan?		
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
No	39	43.3
Yes	50	55.6
Don't know/No response	1	1.1
Total	90	100
Do teachers have a weekly work plan or lesson plan for each subject?		
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
No	6	6.7
Yes	84	93.3
Total	90	100
Do you review the lesson plan and provide feedback each week?		
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
0	24	26.7
1	58	64.4
888	2	2.2
999	6	6.7
Total	90	100

How often do schools administrators summarize or compile school metrics?		
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Weekly	8	8.9
Every 2 weeks	11	12.2
Once a month	44	48.9
Once a quarter	23	25.6
Other	4	4.4
Total	90	100
Does the school have a time book for recording daily teacher attendance such as		
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
No	2	2.2
Yes	88	97.8
Total	90	100
How often are teachers trained or do they meet to discuss best teaching practice		
Response	**Freq**	**Percentage**
Weekly	5	5.6
Every 2 weeks	17	18.9
Once a month	51	56.7
Once a quarter	15	16.7
Other	2	2.2
Total	90	100

Annex 3: Intercorrelation Coefficient

The ICCs from the midterm sample are presented in Table 26. Learner data was clustered at the school level. All other data was clustered at the region level.

Table 26: Midterm Indicator Intercorrelation Coefficients

Indicator	Intercorrelation Coefficient
Initial Sound Identification Score	0.306
Familiar Word Score	0.264
Letter Identification Score	0.359
Oral Reading Fluency Score	0.236
Reading Comprehension Score	0.187
School Director Knowledge Composite Score	0.158
Quality Teaching Composite Score	0.392

Annex 4: Bibliography

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Annex 5: Data Collection Instruments

- School Director Survey
- School Observation
- Classroom Observation (Portuguese and English versions)
- Learner Survey

School Director Survey

Question (*English)*	**Question *(Portuguese)***	**Response Options (*English)***	**Response Options (*Portuguese)***
Hello! My name is [YOUR NAME] and I am working with Catholic Relief Services. We are gathering information on classrooms throughout the MeREECE project area. This will help us to better understand similarities and differences in schools. With your permission, I would like to spend the morning in the classroom with [TEACHER'S NAME]. Before class begins, I would like to ask both of you some general questions about your school and this classroom. I may also have some questions for you after class ends. Please be assured we are not evaluating a teacher or a school but are gathering information we think will be useful for promoting child development. Your participation will be anonymous, and no personal identifiers will be attached to any of the data we collect here today.	Olá! O meu nome é [O SEU NOME] e estou a trabalhar com os Serviços Católicos de Socorro (CRS). Estamos a recolher informações sobre salas de aula em toda a área do projecto MeREECE. Isto irá ajudar-nos a compreender melhor as semelhanças e diferenças nas escolas. Com a vossa permissão, gostaria de passar a manhã na sala de aula com [NOME DO PROFESSOR]. Antes do início das aulas, gostaria de fazer a ambos algumas perguntas gerais sobre a vossa escola e sobre esta sala de aula. Posso também ter algumas perguntas para vos fazer após o fim das aulas. Estejam certos de que não estamos a avaliar um professor ou uma escola, mas sim a recolher informações que pensamos que serão úteis para promover o desenvolvimento infantil. A vossa participação será anónima, e não serão anexados identificadores pessoais a nenhum dos dados que aqui recolhemos hoje.		
Do you want to participate in this survey?	Quer participar deste inquérito?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
Is the respondent male or female?	O inquirido é homem ou mulher?	Male	Homem
		Female	Mulher
Before we discuss the school, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.	Antes de discutirmos sobre a escola, gostaria de lhe fazer algumas perguntas a seu respeito.		
Are you the School Director?	É o Director da Escola?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
What is your role at the school?	Qual é o seu papel na escola?	Deputy Director	Diretor Adjunto
		Teacher	Professor

		Other	Outros
If other, specify:	Se outro, especificar.		
How old are you?	Qual é a sua idade?	Number	Número
How many years have you been a director?	Há quantos anos é director?	Number	Número
How many years have you been in this role?	Há quantos anos desempenha este papel?	Number	Número
How many years have you been at this school?	Ha quantos anos esta nesta escola?	Number	Número
Now I would like to see your school's enrollment record.	Agora gostaria de ver o registo de matrículas da vossa escola.		
What classes do you have in your school?	Que aulas tem na sua escola?	Pre-school	Pré-escola
		Kindergarten	Jardim de Infância
		Grade 1	1° Ano
		Grade 2	2° Ano
		Grade 3	3° Ano
		Grade 4	4° Ano

		Grade 5	5° Ano
		Grade 6	6° Ano
		Other	Outros
If other, specify.	Se outro, especificar.		
Does the school have combined classes?	A escola tem aulas combinadas?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
Which classes are combined?	Que classes são combinadas?	open	
How many learners are enrolled in the school year 2020-2021?	Quantos alunos estão matriculados nesta escola para o ano lectivo 2020/2021?		
Number of boys enrolled in pre-school	Número de rapazes matriculados na pré-escola		
Number of girls enrolled in pre-school	Número de raparigas matriculadas na pré-escola		
Total pre-school enrollment	Inscrição total na pré-escola		
Number of boys enrolled in Kindergarten	Número de rapazes matriculados no Jardim de Infância		
Number of girls enrolled in Kindergarten	Número de raparigas matriculadas no Jardim de Infância		
Total Kindergarten enrollment	Inscrição total no jardim-de-infância		
Number of boys enrolled in Grade 1	Número de rapazes inscritos no 1º Ano		
Number of girls enrolled in Grade 1	Número de raparigas inscritas no 1º Ano		
Total Grade 1 enrollment	Total de Inscritos no 1º Ano		
Number of boys enrolled in Grade 2	Número de rapazes inscritos no 2º Ano		
Number of girls enrolled in Grade 2	Número de raparigas inscritas no 2º Ano		
Total Grade 2 enrollment	Total de Inscritos no 2º Ano		
Number of boys enrolled in Grade 3	Número de rapazes inscritos no 3º Ano		
Number of girls enrolled in Grade 3	Número de raparigas inscritas no 3º Ano		
Total Grade 3 enrollment	Total de inscritos no 3º Ano		
Number of boys enrolled in Grade 4	Número de rapazes inscritos no 4º Ano		

Number of girls enrolled in Grade 4	Número de raparigas inscritas no 4º Ano		
Total Grade 4 enrollment	Total de inscritos no 4º Ano		
Number of boys enrolled in Grade 5	Número de rapazes inscritos no 5º Ano		
Number of girls enrolled in Grade 5	Número de raparigas inscritas 5º Ano		
Total Grade 5 enrollment	Total de inscritos no 5º Ano		
Number of boys enrolled in Grade 6	Número de rapazes inscritos no 6º Ano		
Number of girls enrolled in Grade 6	Número de raparigas inscritas no 6º Ano		
Total Grade 6 enrollment	Total de inscritos no 6º Ano		
How many teachers do you have at this school?	Quantos professores tem nesta escola?		
Number of male teachers	Número de professores do sexo masculino		
Number of female teachers	Número de professoras		
How many teachers are in attendace today?	Quantos professores estão hoje presentes?		
Number of male teachers present	Número de professores homens presentes		
Number of female teachers present	Número de professoras presentes		
Does the school have a time book for recording daily teacher attendance such as a daily time book?	A escola tem um livro de ponto para registar a frequência diária dos professores, tal como um livro de ponto diário?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde
On average, how many hours per school day are teachers scheduled to be teaching?	Em média, quantas horas por dia lectivo os professores estão programados para ensinar? Ou em media, quantas horas letivas diarias sao previstas para os professores?		
Is teacher housing offered?	Os professores sao oferecidos alojamento ou residencia?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde

Do you track the reason for a learner's absence from school in the school register?	Acompanha a razão da ausência de um estudante no registo escolar?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde
Why not?	Porque não?	Too difficult	Demasiado difícil
		Takes too much time	Demora muito tempo
		There is no way to know why a learner is absent	Não há forma de saber porque é que um estudante está ausente
		Other	Outros
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde
If other, specify:	Se outro, especificar.	open	
Can you estimate how many days, on average, learners have missed school for health-related reasons over the last two weeks?	Pode estimar quantos dias, em média, os alunos faltaram à escola por razões relacionadas com a saúde nas últimas duas semanas?	1-2 days	1-2 dias
		3-5 days	3-5 dias
		6-10 days	6-10 dias
		More than 10 days	Mais de 10 dias
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde
Please tell me the number of health-related absences from the register for the prior two weeks.	Por favor, indiquem-me o número de faltas ao registo por razões de saúde nas duas semanas anteriores.	open	
How many days was school in session the last two weeks?	Quantos dias de aulas foram leccionados nas últimas duas semanas?	number	

How often are teachers trained or do they meet to discuss best teaching practices?	Com que frequência os professores são formados ou reúnem-se para discutir as melhores práticas de ensino?	Weekly	Semanalmente
		Every 2 weeks	A cada 2 semanas
		Once a month	Uma vez por mês
		Once a quarter	Uma vez por trimestre
		Other	Outros
If other, specify:	Se outro, especificar.	open	
Is there a school improvement plan?	Existe um plano de melhoramento da escola?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde
Can you please show me a copy of the school improvement plan?	Pode mostrar-me por favor uma cópia do plano de melhoramento da escola?	School director shows a copy	O director da escola mostra uma cópia
		School director does not show a copy	O director da escola não mostra uma cópia
Why doesn't the school director show you a copy of the school improvement plan?	Porque é que o director da escola não lhe mostra uma cópia do plano de melhoramento da escola?	open	
Do teachers have a weekly work plan or lesson plan for each subject?	Os professores têm um plano de trabalho semanal ou um plano de aulas para cada disciplina?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde
Do you review the lesson plan and provide feedback each week?	Revêem o plano de aulas e dão feedback todas as semanas?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde

How often do schools administrators summarize or compile school metrics?	Com que frequência os administradores escolares resumem ou compilam as métricas escolares?	Weekly	Semanalmente
		Every 2 weeks	A cada 2 semanas
		Once a month	Uma vez por mês
		Once a quarter	Uma vez por trimestre
		Other	Outros
Does your school have a functioning kitchen?	A sua escola tem uma cozinha funcional?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
		Other	Outros
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde
If other, specify:	Se outro, especificar.	open	
Where is the kitchen located?	Onde está situada a cozinha?	open	
How far away is the kitchen?	A que distância fica a cozinha?	Less than 5 minute walk	Menos de 5 minutos a pé
		5–10-minute walk	5-10 minutos a pé
		10–30-minute walk	10-30 minutos a pé
		Greater than 30-minute walk	Maior do que 30 minutos a pé
Does your school have a warehouse or room where you plan to store commodities?	A sua escola tem um armazém ou sala onde sao armazenados as mercadorias/comidas ou género?	Yes	Sim
		No	Não
		Other	Outros
		Don't know/No response	Não sei/Não responde
If other, specify:	Se outro, especificar.	open	

School Observation

Question (*English)*	**Question *(Portuguese)***	**Response Options (*English)***	**Response Options (*Portuguese)***
Observe the head teacher's office during the visit to verify demonstration of the following techniques/tools.	*Observar o gabinete do Diretor durante a visita para verificar a demonstração das seguintes técnicas/ferramentas.*		
Teacher attendance table	Tabela de presença de professores	Seen	Visto
		Not seen	Não visto
Teacher assignment list	Lista de atribuições de professores	Seen	Visto
		Not seen	Não visto
Visual teaching aides	Auxiliares visuais de ensino	Seen	Visto
		Not seen	Não visto
Didactic materials	Materiais didácticos	Seen	Visto
		Not seen	Não visto
Book inventory	Inventário de livros	Seen	Visto
		Not seen	Não visto
School records	Registos escolares	Seen	Visto
		Not seen	Não visto
How many learners are physically present in each classroom? Enumerator must do a live head count. Do not take info from register.	*Quantos alunos estão fisicamente presentes em cada sala de aula? O numerador deve fazer uma contagem de cabeças vivas. Não retirar informações do registo.*		
Number of boys in attendance in pre-school	Número de rapazes em frequência na pré-escola		
Number of girls in attendance in pre-school	Número de raparigas em frequência na pré-escola		
Total pre-school attendance	Total de presença na pré-escola		
Number of boys in attendance in Kindergarten	Número de rapazes presentes no Jardim de Infância		
Number of girls in attendance in Kindergarten	Número de raparigas presentes no Jardim de Infância		
Total Kindergarten attendance	Total de presença no jardim-de-infância		
Number of boys in attendance in Grade 1	Número de rapazes presentes no 1º Ano		

Number of girls in attendance in Grade 1	Número de raparigas presentes no 1º Ano		
Total Grade 1 attendance	Total de presença no 1º Ano		
Number of boys in attendance in Grade 2	Número de rapazes presentes no 2º Ano		
Number of girls in attendance in Grade 2	Número de raparigas presentes no 2º Ano		
Total Grade 2 attendance	Total de presença no 2º Ano		
Number of boys in attendance in Grade 3	Número de rapazes presentes no 3º Ano		
Number of girls in attendance in Grade 3	Número de raparigas presentes no 3º Ano		
Total Grade 3 attendance	Total de presença no 3º Ano		
Number of boys in attendance in Grade 4	Número de rapazes presentes no 4º Ano		
Number of girls in attendance in Grade 4	Número de raparigas presentes no 4º Ano		
Total Grade 4 attendance	Total de presença no 4º Ano		
Number of boys in attendance in Grade 5	Número de rapazes presentes no 5º Ano		
Number of girls in attendance in Grade 5	Número de raparigas presentes no 5º Ano		
Total Grade 5 attendance	Total de presença no 5º Ano		
Number of boys in attendance in Grade 6	Número de rapazes presentes no 6º Ano		
Number of girls in attendance in Grade 6	Número de raparigas presentes no 6º Ano		
Total Grade 6 enrollment	Total de presença no 6º Ano		
Before leaving the school, please take a picture of the latrines, handwashing station, kitchen, and warehouse. *Antes de deixar a escola, tirar uma fotografia das latrinas, da estação de lavagem das mãos, da cozinha, e do armazém.*			
Thank you for allowing me to observe your classroom and school today. As I have mentioned, we are gathering this information to help us learn about schools throughout the CRS project MeREECE. This will contribute to national knowledge on education. This could help CRS support our country to better plan	Obrigado por ter me permitido hoje observar a vossa sala de aula e a escola. Como já referi, estamos a recolher esta informação para nos ajudar a conhecer as escolas através do projeto MeREECE do CRS. Isto irá contribuir para o conhecimento nacional sobre educação. Isto poderá ajudar o CRS		

for primary education. Thank you so much again.	a apoiar o nosso país a planificar melhor o ensino primário. Muito obrigado, mais uma vez.		
New Questions			
Is the kitchen well-equipped?	A cozinha está bem equipada?	The kitchen has everything it needs to provide meals to all pupils.	A cozinha tem tudo o que precisa para fornecer refeições a todos os alunos.
		The kitchen mostly has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils. It could use additional supplies in one or two items.	A cozinha tem principalmente tudo o que precisa para fornecer refeições aos alunos. Pode usar mantimentos adicionais em um ou dois itens.
		The kitchen has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in multiple items.	A cozinha tem tudo o que precisa para fornecer refeições aos alunos adequadamente. Pode usar mantimentos adicionais em vários itens.
		The kitchen does not have everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in many items.	A cozinha não tem tudo o que precisa para fornecer refeições aos alunos adequadamente. Poderia usar mantimentos adicionais em muitos itens.
		The kitchen does not have the majority of the items it needs to provide meals to pupils.	A cozinha não tem a maioria dos itens que precisa para fornecer refeições aos alunos.

Is the kitchen clean?	A cozinha está limpa?	Everything in the kitchen is clean.	Tudo na cozinha está limpo.
		Mostly everything in the kitchen is clean. One or two things could use further cleaning.	A maior parte de tudo na cozinha está limpo. Uma ou duas coisas precisam de mais limpezas.
		Many things in the kitchen are clean. Three or four things could use further cleaning.	Muitas coisas na cozinha estão limpas. Três ou quatro coisas precisam de mais limpezas.
		The kitchen is not very clean. Many items could use further cleaning.	A cozinha não é muito limpa. Muitos itens poderiam ser mais limpezas.
		The kitchen is not clean. The majority of items need cleaning.	A cozinha não está limpa. A maioria dos artigos precisa de limpeza.
Does the school have a kitchen storeoom?	A escola tem um armazém de cozinha?	Yes	Sim
		Yes but locked	Sim, mas bloqueado ou nao funciona
		No	Não
Is the storeroom clean?			
	O armazém está limpo?	Everything in the storeroom is clean.	Tudo no depósito está limpo.
		Mostly everything in the storeroom is clean. One or two things could use further cleaning.	A maior parte do que está no armazem está limpo. Uma ou duas coisas precisam de ser mais limpezas.
		Many things in the storeroom are clean. Three or four things could use further cleaning.	Muitas coisas no armazem estão limpas. Três ou quatro coisas precisam de mais limpezas.
		The storeroom is not very clean. Many items could	O armazem não está muito limpo. Muitos itens

		use further cleaning.	precisam da limpeza.
		The storeroom is not clean. The majority of items need cleaning.	O depósito não está limpo. A maioria dos artigos precisa de limpeza.
Is the storeroom well organized?	O armazém está bem organizado?	The storeroom has everything it needs to provide meals to all pupils.	O armazém tem tudo o que precisa para fornecer refeições a todos os alunos.
		The storeroom mostly has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils. It could use additional supplies in one or two items.	O armazém tem quase tudo o que precisa para fornecer refeições aos alunos. Pode usar mantimentos adicionais em um ou dois itens.
		The storeroom has everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in multiple items.	O armazém tem tudo o que precisa para fornecer refeições adequadamente aos alunos. Pode usar mantimentos adicionais em vários itens.
		The storeroom does not have everything it needs to provide meals to pupils adequately. It could use additional supplies in many items.	O armazém não tem tudo o que precisa para fornecer refeições adequadamente aos alunos. Poderia usar mantimentos adicionais em muitos itens.
		The storeroom does not have the majority of the items it needs to provide meals to pupils.	O armazém não tem a maioria dos itens que precisa para fornecer refeições aos alunos.

A Drinking Water	A Água Potável	No water available at school. Water, if present, is provided by parents, children, or staff.	Não há água disponível na escola. Agua, se presente/existe, é fornecida por pais, filhos ou pessoal.
		Available water is: Unprotected inground well / spring, untreated rainwater, surface water.	A água é disponível: Poço / fonte desprotegido, água da chuva não tratada, água de superfície.
		Available water is a cart with a small tank / drum or a protected spring.	A água disponível é um carrinho com um pequeno tanque/deposito/ despositivo ou uma fonte protegida.
		The available source of sanitary water is running water, a public tap, treated rainwater, a protected dug well or bottled water.	A fonte disponível de água sanitária é água corrente, uma torneira pública, água da chuva tratada, um poço cavado protegido ou água engarrafada.
Verify if the source is functional today	Verificar que a fonte está a funcionar hoje	Yes	Não
		No	Sim
Handwashing Facilities	Despositivo de lavagem de mãos	No handwashing station at the school.	Não há despositivo de lavagem de mãos na escola.
		Shared basin or bucket (hand washing is done in water, water does not flow or is not poured).	Bacia ou balde partilhado (a lavagem das mãos é feita em água, a água não corre ou não é vertida).
		Hand pouring system with used water separated from water to clean	Sistema de despejo manual com água usada separada da água para limpar as

		hands but without soap.	mãos mas sem sabão.
		There is running water OR a hand pour system (with the wastewater separated from the clean water for washing hands) AND soap.	Há água corrente OU um sistema de despejo manual (com as águas residuais separadas da água limpa para lavar as mãos) E sabão.
Accessibility of Handwashing Facilities	Acessibilidade dos despositivos de Lavagem de Mãos	Not accessible to the most young or children with disabilities	Não acessível aos mais jovens ou às crianças com deficiência
		Accessible to the most young OR children with disabilities	Acessível aos mais jovens OU crianças com deficiência
		Accessible to the most young AND children with disabilities	Acessível aos mais jovens E às crianças com deficiência
Toilets	Latrinas	No toilets available (only in the bush or in the fields).	Não há casas de banho disponíveis (apenas no mato ou nos outros lugares fora da escola).
		The toilets are pit latrines or buckets.	As sanitas são latrinas de fossa ou baldes.
		The toilets are composting toilets.	As casas-de-banho são casas-de-banho de **compostagem.**
Verify if the toilets are open/being used by learners today	Verificar se as casas-de-banho/latrinas estão abertas/estão a ser utilizadas pelos estudantes hoje	Yes	Sim
		No	Não

State of the Toilets • The toilets are clean • The toilets are separated by sex • There is at least one toilet per 50 boys and one toilet per 25 girls • The toilets are accessible to the most young • The toilets are accessible to learners with disabilities • There is one toilet, with water, for menstrual hygeine for the girls and one for the teachers	Estado das casas de banhos/latrinas - As casas de banhos/latrinas estao limpas - As casas de banhos/latrinas são separados por sexo - Há pelo menos uma casa de banhos/latrina para cada 50 rapazes e uma casa de banhos/latrina para cada 25 raparigas - As casas de banhos/latrinas são acessíveis aos mais jovens - As casas de banhos/latrinas são acessíveis aos estudantes com deficiência - Há uma latrina, com água, para a higienização menstrual para as raparigas e um para os professores	Zero conditions are met.	Zero condição cumprida.
		One condition is met.	Uma condição é cumprida.
		Two conditions are met.	Duas condições são cumpridas.
		Three or more conditions are met.	São cumpridas três ou mais condições.
Handwashing Practices	Práticas de lavagem das mãos	The learners don't wash their hands or fewer than 25% do	Os estudantes não lavam as mãos ou menos de 25% lavam
		Handwashing is sporadic (26-50%) OR more than 50% of children wash their hands but without soap or ash.	A lavagem das mãos é esporádica (26-50%) OU mais de 50% das crianças lavam as mãos mas sem sabão ou cinzas.
		51 to 75% of children wash their hands with soap or ash. There is a supportive handwashing system or process (teacher supervises, encourages, is part of routine, etc.)	51 a 75% das crianças lavam as suas mãos com sabão ou cinza. Existe um sistema ou processo de lavagem das mãos de apoio (o professor supervisiona, encoraja, faz parte da rotina, etc.)

		Almost all children (76% to 100%) wash their hands with soap or ash. There is a supportive handwashing system or process (teacher supervises, encourages, is part of routine, etc.)	Quase todas as crianças (76% a 100%) lavam as suas mãos com sabão ou cinza. Existe um sistema ou processo de lavagem das mãos de apoio (o professor supervisiona, encoraja, faz parte da rotina, etc.)

Métrica de Aprendizagem Infantil Global G4-OC-4.2

Ferramenta de Observação em Sala de Aula (CO)

INFORMAÇÕES DA ESCOLA / OBSERVAÇÃO

As informações para esta folha serão introduzidas antes da visita
Os exemplos para todos os itens devem ser revistos para adaptação cultural

a.	País [CO_País][60]	
b.	ID Escola [CO_ID_Escola]	
c.	Turma (ou ID Turma) [CO_ID_Turma]	
d.	Data de observação [CO_Data_Obs]	
e.	ID Enumerador [CO_ID_Enumerador]	
f.	Hora de início da observação [CO_Início_Obs]	
g.	Hora de fim da observação [CO_Fim_Obs]	

INFORMAÇÕES BÁSICAS SOBRE A SALA DE AULA

PERGUNTAS A COLOCAR AO PROFESSOR ANTES DA OBSERVAÇÃO		
1	Total de matrículas na escola [CO_Inscr_Total]	
2	Que nivel esta a observar hoje? [class]	
3	Quantos alunos estão matriculados na turma que está a observar hoje? [Class_enroll]	
3a	Número total de rapazes matriculados na turma que será observada [CO_Inscr_Garcons]	
3b	Número total de raparigas matriculadas na turma que será observada [CO_Inscr_Filles]	

CRIANÇAS E PROFESSORES PRESENTES – A CONTAR NO INÍCIO DA OBSERVAÇÃO		
4	Número de rapazes presentes **[Peça a todos os rapazes para se levantarem e**	

[60] A fonte a vermelho indica nome variável que deve ser usado durante a introdução de dados e partilha de ficheiros. Ver PIRS para mais detalhes.

	conte-os] [CO_Presents_Garcons]	
5	Número de raparigas presentes **[Peça a todas as raparigas para se levantarem e conte-as]** [CO_Presentes_Filles]	
6	Número de professores/professores assistentes/outros adultos presentes na sala de aula **e** que trabalham com crianças? **[Introduza o número de cada]** [CO_Presents_Adultsquitravaillent]	

METODOLOGIA DE ENSINO E CONTEÚDO EDUCATIVO (ECTM) Para os seguintes itens, selecione a opção que melhor descreve as lições ou atividades observadas para cada área.					
7.	**Oportunidades de aprendizagem para apoiar o desenvolvimento de <u>aptidões matemáticas</u> (sentido de número, tempo, formas, cores, sequência, tamanho).** [CO_ECTM_Math] ☐ **Verifique se o professor se refere a um plano de lições para estruturar o seu ensino da matemática** [CO_ECTM_PlanMath]	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		Nenhuma atividade de matemática observada	O professor ensina conceitos matemáticos **<u>APENAS</u>** através de: Atividades repetitivas. Os exemplos incluem respostas em grupo a perguntas fechadas (tais como contar até dez); as crianças usam individualmente um apontador para nomear os números; escrever ou copiar números	O professor ensina conceitos matemáticos usando **<u>UMA</u>** das seguintes estratégias: <u>As crianças</u> exploram e brincam com objetos concretos para aprender conceitos <u>As crianças</u> têm alguma escolha sobre como realizar uma atividade <u>O professor</u> envolve as crianças na discussão e, por vezes, usa perguntas abertas <u>O professor</u> relaciona as lições com experiências da vida real ou quotidiana	O professor ensina conceitos matemáticos usando**<u>DUAS OU MAIS</u>** das seguintes estratégias: <u>As crianças</u> exploram e brincam com objetos concretos para aprender conceitos <u>As crianças</u> têm alguma escolha sobre como realizar uma atividade <u>O professor</u> envolve as crianças na discussão e, por vezes, usa perguntas abertas <u>O professor</u> relaciona as lições com experiências da vida real ou quotidiana
8.	**Oportunidades de aprendizagem para apoiar o <u>desenvolvimento de aptidões de alfabetização</u> (identificação de letras, fonética).** [CO_ECTM_Alphabetisation] ☐ **Verifique se o professor se refere a um plano de lições para estruturar o seu ensino da alfabetização** [CO_ECTM_PlanAlphabetisati	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		Nenhuma atividade de alfabetização observada	O professor ensina conceitos de alfabetização **<u>APENAS</u>** através de: Atividades repetitivas. Os exemplos incluem respostas em grupo a perguntas fechadas (tais como cantar o alfabeto, repetir os sons das letras); as crianças usam individualmente um apontador para nomear as letras; escrever ou copiar	O professor ensina conceitos de alfabetização usando **<u>UMA</u>** das seguintes estratégias: <u>As crianças</u> exploram e brincam com objetos concretos para aprender conceitos <u>As crianças</u> têm alguma escolha sobre como realizar uma atividade <u>O professor</u> envolve as crianças na discussão e,	O professor ensina conceitos de alfabetização usando **<u>DUAS OU MAIS</u>** das seguintes estratégias: <u>As crianças</u> exploram e brincam com objetos concretos para aprender conceitos <u>As crianças</u> têm alguma escolha sobre como realizar uma atividade <u>O professor</u> envolve as crianças na discussão e,

METODOLOGIA DE ENSINO E CONTEÚDO EDUCATIVO (ECTM) Para os seguintes itens, selecione a opção que melhor descreve as lições ou atividades observadas para cada área.					
	on]		letras	por vezes, usa perguntas abertas O professor relaciona as lições com experiências da vida real ou quotidiana	por vezes, usa perguntas abertas O professor relaciona as lições com experiências da vida real ou quotidiana
9.	**Oportunidades de aprendizagem para desenvolver aptidões de linguagem expressiva. São conversas que ocorrem entre os professores e as crianças ao longo das observações. As conversas podem ocorrer durante as lições ou entre lições (na transição de uma atividade para outra; durante o tempo livre, etc.).** [CO_ECTM_LangageExp] ☐ **Verifique se o professor está a falar portugues** [CO_ECTM_LangueParlee]	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		As crianças nunca ou raramente são convidadas a contar uma história, descrever acontecimentos ou objetos, ou responder a perguntas ao longo de toda a observação.	O professor incentiva aptidões de linguagem expressiva **APENAS** através de: • Atividades repetitivas. Os exemplos incluem respostas em grupo a perguntas fechadas (tais como pedir às crianças para repetirem uma história ou frases palavra a palavra); as crianças usam individualmente um apontador para repetir palavras ou frases; respostas individuais a perguntas de rotina ou fechadas.	O professor incentiva aptidões de linguagem expressiva usando **UMA** atividade de troca verbal, tal como: Pedir às crianças para descreverem objetos (p.ex., cor, forma, tamanho, função) ou imagens; Encorajar as crianças a contarem histórias ou descrever acontecimentos; "Mostrar e contar" Contar uma história e colocar duas ou mais perguntas sobre a história; Repetir e alongar o que a criança diz e incluir vocabulário mais avançado; Usar a narração de histórias ou discussões para encorajar o uso de vocabulário que estabelece relações com as vidas e experiências das	O professor incentiva aptidões de linguagem expressiva usando **DUAS OU MAIS** atividades de troca verbal, tais como: Pedir às crianças para descreverem objetos (p.ex., cor, forma, tamanho, função) ou imagens; Encorajar as crianças a contarem histórias ou descrever acontecimentos; "Mostrar e contar" Contar uma história e colocar duas ou mais perguntas sobre a história; Repetir e alongar o que a criança diz e incluir vocabulário mais avançado; Usar a narração de histórias ou discussões para encorajar o uso de vocabulário que estabelece relações com as vidas e experiências das

METODOLOGIA DE ENSINO E CONTEÚDO EDUCATIVO (ECTM) Para os seguintes itens, selecione a opção que melhor descreve as lições ou atividades observadas para cada área.					
				crianças.	crianças.

METODOLOGIA DE ENSINO E CONTEÚDO EDUCATIVO (ECTM) Para os seguintes itens, selecione a opção que melhor descreve as lições ou atividades observadas para cada área.					
10.	**Leitura de livros para apoiar as aptidões de audição e fala das crianças** [CO_ECTM_Livre]	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		(<u>para ECD[61]/ anos mais novos</u>) O professor: Não lê livros às crianças **OU** Lê livros que não são adequados à idade (i.e., texto ou livros escolares para crianças mais velhas ou adultos; texto religioso para adultos; ou livros sem imagens). (<u>para anos mais velhos</u>) Estudantes: Não lêem textos **OU** Lêem textos que não são adequados à idade (i.e., texto ou livros escolares para crianças mais novas; livros com imagens).	(<u>para ECD/ anos mais novos</u>) O professor: Lê para a turma sem discussão **OU** Lê para a turma sem colocar perguntas sobre a leitura. (<u>para anos mais velhos</u>) O professor: Não discute a leitura **OU** Não coloca perguntas sobre a leitura.	O professor discute a leitura com a turma usando **<u>UMA</u>** das seguintes estratégias: Coloca perguntas básicas ou fechadas às crianças sobre o que aconteceu Encoraja as crianças a discutirem a leitura através de perguntas abertas Fala sobre o vocabulário aprendido no livro Estabelece uma relação entre a leitura e as próprias experiências ou o contexto das crianças As crianças brincam com objetos ou fazem uma atividade relacionada com a leitura	O professor discute a leitura com a turma usando **<u>DUAS OU MAIS</u>** das seguintes estratégias: Coloca perguntas básicas ou fechadas às crianças sobre o que aconteceu Encoraja as crianças a discutirem a leitura através de perguntas abertas Fala sobre o vocabulário aprendido no livro Estabelece uma relação entre a leitura e as próprias experiências ou o contexto das crianças As crianças brincam com objetos ou fazem uma atividade relacionada com a leitura

[61] Desenvolvimento Infantil Inicial (ECD)

METODOLOGIA DE ENSINO E CONTEÚDO EDUCATIVO (ECTM) Para os seguintes itens, selecione a opção que melhor descreve as lições ou atividades observadas para cada área.					
11.	**Oportunidades de aprendizagem para promover <u>aptidões de motricidade fina</u>** Escrita Desenho/pintura Recolha de objetos pequenos Ordenação de objetos pequenos Tecelagem Amarrar missangas [CO_ECTM_MotricFine] **(*Nota*: *Esta pergunta só se aplica a estudantes do 2.º Ciclo / ~ 8 anos.)***	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		Nenhuma atividade de motricidade fina observada.	O professor ensina aptidões de motricidade fina **<u>APENAS</u>** através de: Atividades que NÃO são adequadas à fase de desenvolvimento (ou seja, são demasiado difíceis ou demasiado fáceis para <u>a maioria</u> das crianças compreenderem ou fazerem, tais como usar lápis ou seguir as linhas antes de começarem a usar lápis ou canetas de cor)	O professor ensina aptidões de motricidade fina usando atividades adequadas à fase de desenvolvimento **MAS**: As atividades estão <u>focadas em realizar a tarefa definida pelo professor</u> em vez de desenvolver as suas aptidões de motricidade fina. As atividades focam-se no <u>produto</u>, não no processo. As atividades não são orientadas pelas crianças; as crianças não têm escolha no que vão fazer ou como usar os materiais.	O professor ensina aptidões de motricidade fina usando atividades adequadas à fase de desenvolvimento **E**: As atividades que são orientadas pelas crianças e focadas no <u>processo</u> em vez de num objetivo específico. Atividades que permitem às crianças explorarem materiais e como podem ser manuseados de uma forma divertida.
12.	**Oportunidades de aprendizagem que permitem às crianças participarem em <u>atividades de motricidade grossa</u>** Correr Alongar Dançar Jogos de bola Brincar à apanhada [CO_ECTM_MotriGlobale]	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		Nenhuma atividade de motricidade grossa observada	Menos de 10 minutos de atividade de motricidade grossa observados ou apenas algumas crianças participam.	Menos de 20 minutos de atividade de motricidade grossa observados **OU** menos de metade das crianças participam.	A maioria das crianças participam em, pelo menos, 20 minutos da atividade de motricidade grossa

METODOLOGIA DE ENSINO E CONTEÚDO EDUCATIVO (ECTM) Para os seguintes itens, selecione a opção que melhor descreve as lições ou atividades observadas para cada área.					
13.	**Oportunidades de aprendizagem que promovem <u>brincadeira livre ou opção</u> <u>livre</u>** Explorar centros de atividade em sala de aula Jogos auto-dirigidos em grupos pequenos Podem brincar dentro ou fora da sala de aula [CO_ECTM_JeuLibre]	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		Nenhuma atividade de opção livre/brincadeira livre observada	O professor decide onde ou como as crianças vão brincar com materiais **OU** O professor dá opções limitadas para atividade E as crianças têm de brincar com materiais de forma prescrita.	As crianças têm UMA oportunidade de escolher a sua própria atividade, onde e como vão brincar com materiais **MAS** O professor não interage para acrescentar algo à brincadeira das crianças ou alongar a aprendizagem	As crianças têm UMA ou mais oportunidades de escolher a sua própria atividade e onde e como vão brincar com materiais **E** O professor interage para acrescentar algo à brincadeira das crianças ou alongar a aprendizagem.
14.	**Oportunidades de aprendizagem que permitem às crianças participarem em <u>atividades musicais/de movimento</u>** Cantar canções Dançar Representar e fazer teatro Canções/danças em grupo, juntos ou à vez Rimas infantis Vídeo musical educativo [CO_ECTM_Mouvement]	**1**		**4**	
		Nenhuma atividade musical/de movimento observada.		Ocorreu, pelo menos, uma atividade musical ou de movimento música durante a observação	

PROCESSOS CENTRADOS NA CRIANÇA (CCP)							
15.	**As crianças participaram durante a observação.** *Os exemplos de participação incluem prestar atenção, olhar para o professor, focar-se na lição ou no trabalho, participar em atividades.*	a. Metade da sala - 15 mi [CO_CCP_PreteAttent1]	b. A outra metade da sala - 15 min [CO_CCP_PreteAttent2]	c. Metade da sala – 30 mi [CO_CCP_PreteAttent3]	d. A outra metade da sala - 30 min [CO_CCP_PreteAttent4]	e. Metade da sala - 45 mi [CO_CCP_PreteAttent5]	f. A outra metade da sala - 45 min [CO_CCP_PreteAttent6]
16.	**Grupos.** Os tipos de grupos incluem: • Grupo todo (a turma toda) • Grupos pequenos (três ou mais) • Pares (dois estudantes) a trabalharem juntos • Estudantes a trabalharem sozinhos [CO_CCP_Groupe]	**1** Durante toda a observação, foi usado um tipo de grupo.	**2** Durante a observação, foram usados dois tipos de grupos.		**3** Durante a observação, foram usados três tipos de grupos.		**4** Durante a observação, foram formados os quatros grupos.

PROFESSORES ENCORAJADORES (ST)					
17.	**O professor dá algumas instruções individualizadas às crianças** [CO_ST_Individuel]	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		O professor: **NÃO** demonstra ter consciência de que algumas crianças têm capacidades e aptidões diferentes (o professor usa uma abordagem universal em que todas as crianças fazem o mesmo trabalho e recebem as mesmas instruções e o mesmo apoio, ignora as crianças com dificuldades, não faz adaptações para crianças com necessidades especiais).	O professor: **Ocasionalmente** demonstra ter consciência das necessidades individuais das crianças verificando se entenderam conceitos e dando um apoio mínimo.	O professor: Procura crianças com dificuldades e ajuda-as (com ou sem pedidos de ajuda específicos) **OU** Procura crianças que não são desafiadas e dá-lhes atividades adequadas à sua fase de desenvolvimento ou faz perguntas para as manter empenhadas.	O professor: Procura crianças com dificuldades e ajuda-as (com ou sem pedidos de ajuda específicos) **E** Procura crianças que não são desafiadas e dá-lhes atividades adequadas à sua fase de desenvolvimento ou faz perguntas para as manter empenhadas.

MATERIAIS DE ENSINO E APRENDIZAGEM (TLM)					
		1	**2**		**4**
As crianças <u>participam</u> com os seguintes materiais. *(A lista de materiais para cada tipo são meros exemplos. Quaisquer materiais usados para a atividade, independentemente de estarem aqui listados, de terem sido comprados/feitos/encontrados, podem ser contados.)*		**Nenhum material presente**	**Materiais presentes <u>MAS</u> as crianças não os usam**		**Materiais presentes <u>E</u> as crianças usam-nos**
18.	**Utensílios de escrita** *(lápis, canetas, lápis de cor, giz)* [CO_TLM_Ecrire]				
19.	**Brinquedos educativos ou materiais de matemática** *(tampas de garrafa, dados, água, missangas, pedras, ábacos, materiais usados para contar ou ordenar, puzzles, jogos)* [CO_TLM_Jouets]				
20.	**Textos** *(livros com imagens (anos mais novos), texto, etc., incluindo os feitos pelo professor)* [CO_TLM_Texte]				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
		1-25% dos estudantes presentes	26-50% dos estudantes	51-75% dos estudantes	76-100% dos estudantes
21.	**Número de livros completos na sala na <u>língua de instrução</u>** (ver definição no manual para livros "completos"; contar as várias cópias dos mesmos títulos em separado) [CO_TLM_LivreInstruction]				

		(rácio 1:4)	presentes (rácio 1:2)	presentes (rácio 3:4)	presentes (rácio 1:1)

Global Child Learning Metric
G4-OC-4.2
Classroom Observation (CO) Tool

QUESTIONS TO ASK TEACHER IN ADVANCE OF OBSERVATION		
1	Total Enrollment in school	
2	What class level are you observing today?	
3	How many learners are enrolled in the class you are observing today?	
3a	Total number of boys enrolled in class that will be observed	
3b	Total number of girls enrolled in class that will be observed	

CHILDREN & TEACHERS PRESENT – TO BE COUNTED AT BEGINNING OF OBSERVATION		
4	Number of boys present **[Have all the boys stand and count them]**	
5	Number of girls present **[Have all the girls stand and count them]**	
6	Number of teachers/ teaching assistants/ other adults present in the classroom **and** working with children? **[Enter the number of each]**	

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY (ECTM) For following items, select the option that best describes the lessons or activities observed for each area.					
7.	**Learning opportunities to support development of <u>math skills</u> (number sense, time, shapes, colors, sequence, size).** ☐ **Check if teacher refers to a lesson plan to structure their math teaching**	**1** No math activities are observed	**2** Teacher teaches math concepts **<u>ONLY</u>** by: • Repetitive activities. Examples include group response to close-ended questions (such as counting to ten); individual children using a pointer to name numbers; writing or copying numbers	**3** Teacher teaches math concepts by using **<u>ONE</u>** of the following strategies: • <u>Children</u> explore and play with concrete objects to learn concept • <u>Children</u> have some choice in how to carry out an activity • <u>Teacher</u> engages children in discussion, and sometimes uses open-ended questions • <u>Teacher</u> connects lesson to real-life or every-day experiences	**4** Teacher teaches math concepts by using **<u>TWO OR MORE</u>** of the following strategies: • <u>Children</u> explore and play with concrete objects to learn concept • <u>Children</u> have some choice in how to carry out an activity • <u>Teacher</u> engages children in discussion, and sometimes uses open-ended questions • <u>Teacher</u> connects lesson to real-life or every-day experiences
8.		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

	Learning opportunities to support <u>development of literacy skills</u> (letter identification, phonics). ☐ **Check if teacher refers to a lesson plan to structure their literacy teaching**	No literacy activities are observed	Teacher teaches literacy concepts **<u>ONLY</u>** by: • Repetitive activities. Examples include group response to close-ended questions (such as singing the alphabet, repeating letter sounds); individual children using a pointer to name letters; writing or copying letters	Teacher teaches literacy concepts by using **<u>ONE</u>** of the following strategies: • <u>Children</u> explore and play with concrete objects to learn concept • <u>Children</u> have some choice in how to carry out an activity • <u>Teacher</u> engages children in discussion, and sometimes uses open-ended questions • <u>Teacher</u> connects lesson to real-life or every-day experiences	Teacher teaches literacy concepts by using **<u>TWO OR MORE</u>** of the following strategies: • <u>Children</u> explore and play with concrete objects to learn concept • <u>Children</u> have some choice in how to carry out an activity • <u>Teacher</u> engages children in discussion, and sometimes uses open-ended questions • <u>Teacher</u> connects lesson to real-life or every-day experiences
9.		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

	Learning opportunities to develop <u>expressive</u> <u>language skills</u>. These are <u>conversations</u> that take place between the teachers and children throughout the observations. Conversations can occur during lessons, or in between lessons (while transitioning from one activity to another; during free play, etc.). ☐ **Check if teacher is speaking in Portuguese**	Children are never or rarely invited to tell a story, describe events or objects, or answer any questions throughout the entire observation.	Teacher encourages expressive language skills **<u>ONLY</u>** by: • Repetitive activities. Examples include group response to close-ended questions (such as asking children to repeat a story or phrases word by word); individual children using a pointer to repeat words or sentences; individual responses to rote or close-ended questions.	Teacher encourages expressive language skills by using **<u>ONE</u>** verbal exchange activity, such as: • Asking children to describe objects (e.g., color, shape, size, function) or pictures; • Encouraging children to tell stories or describe events; • "Show and tell" • Telling a story and asking children two or more open-ended questions about the story • Repeating and extending what child says, and including more advanced vocabulary • Using story telling or discussion to encourage vocabulary that draws connections to the children's lives and experiences.	Teacher encourages expressive language skills using **<u>TWO OR MORE</u>** verbal exchange activities, such as: • Asking children to describe objects (e.g., color, shape, size, function) or pictures; • Encouraging children to tell stories or describe events; • "Show and tell" • Telling a story and asking children two or more open-ended questions about the story • Repeating and extending what child says, and including more advanced vocabulary • Using story telling or discussion to encourage vocabulary that draws connections to the children's lives and experiences.
10.		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

	Book reading to support children's listening and speaking skills	(for ECD[62]/ younger grades) Teacher: • Does not read book(s) to children **OR** • Reads book(s) that are not age-appropriate (i.e., text or schoolbooks for older children or adults; religious text for adults; or books with no pictures). (for older grades) Learners: • Do not read text **OR** • Read text that is not age-appropriate (i.e., text or schoolbooks for younger children; picture books).	(for ECD/ younger grades) Teacher: • Reads to the class without discussion **OR** • Reads to the class without any questions about the reading. (for older grades) Teacher: • Does not discuss reading **OR** • Does not ask questions about the reading.	Teacher discusses the reading with to the class using **ONE** of the following strategies: • Asks children basic or close-ended questions about what happened • Encourages children to discuss the reading through open-ended questions • Talks about vocabulary learned in the book • Connects the reading to the children's own experiences or context • Children play with objects or do an activity related to reading	Teacher discusses the reading with the class using **TWO OR MORE** of the following strategies: • Asks children basic or close-ended questions about what happened • Encourages children to discuss the reading through open-ended questions • Talks about vocabulary learned in the book • Connects the reading to the children's own experiences or context • Children play with objects or do an activity related to reading
11.		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

[62] Early Childhood Development (ECD)

	Learning opportunities to promote <u>fine motor skills</u> • Writing • Drawing/painting • Gathering small objects • Ordering small objects • Weaving • Stringing beads **(*Note: This question is only applicable through ~Grade 2/ ~age 8.)***	No fine motor activity is observed.	Teacher teaches fine motor skills **<u>ONLY</u>** by using: • Activities that are NOT developmentally appropriate (that is, they are too hard or too easy for <u>most</u> children to understand or to do, such as using pencils to trace lines before starting with crayons or markers first)	Teacher teaches fine motor skills by using developmentally appropriate activities **BUT**: • Activities are <u>focused on completing the teacher's defined task</u> rather than developing their fine-motor skills. • Activities focus on <u>product</u>, not process. • Activities are not child-led; children do not have choice in what to do or how to engage with the materials.	Teacher teaches fine motor skills by using developmentally appropriate activities **AND:** • Activities that are child-directed and focused on <u>process</u> rather than specific goal. • Activities that allow children to explore materials and how they can be manipulated in a playful way.
12.	**Learning opportunities that allow children to engage in <u>gross motor activities</u>** • Running • Stretching • Dancing • Ball games • Chasing/tag	**1** No gross motor activity is observed	**2** Less than 10 minutes of gross motor activity is observed or only a few children participate.	**3** Less than 20 minutes of gross motor activity is observed **OR** less than half of children participate.	**4** Most children engage in at least 20 minutes of gross motor activity
13.		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

	Learning activities that promote <u>free play or open choice</u> • Explore activity centers in classroom • Self-directed games in small groups • Play can be inside or outside the classroom	No free choice/open play activity is observed.	• Teacher chooses where or how children will play with materials **OR** • Teacher provides limited choices for activity AND children must play with materials in a prescribed way.	• Children have ONE opportunity to choose their own activity, where and how they play with materials **BUT** • Teacher does not interact to add to children's play or extend learning	• Children have ONE or more opportunities to choose their own activity and where and how they play with materials **AND** • Teacher interacts to add to children's play or extend learning.
14.	**Learning opportunities that allow children to engage in <u>Music/Movement activities</u>** • Singing songs • Dancing • Acting and role-play • Group-songs/dances, all together or in turns • Nursery rhymes • Educational music video	**1**		**4**	
		No music/movement activity is observed.		At least one music or movement activity occurred during observation	

CHILD-CENTERED PROCESSES (CCP)

15.	**Children are engaged throughout the observation.** *Examples of engagement include paying attention, looking at teacher, focusing on lesson or work, participating in activities.*	a. Half of the room – at 15 min: _____	b. Other half of the room – at 15 min: _____	c. Half of the room – at 30 min: _____	d. Other half of the room – at 30 min: _____	e. Half of the room – at 45 min: _____	f. Other half of the room – at 45 min: _____
16.	**Groups.** Grouping types include: • Whole group (entire class) • Small groups (three or more) • Pairs (two learners) working together • Learners working alone	**1**	**2**		**3**		**4**
		One grouping type is used throughout the entire observation.	Two grouping types are used during the observation		Three grouping types are used during the observation		All four groupings are formed throughout the observation

SUPPORTIVE TEACHERS (ST)					
17.	**Teacher provides some individualized instruction to children**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
		Teacher: • Shows **NO** awareness that some children have different needs and abilities (teacher uses a 'one-size fits all' approach where all children do the same work and receive the same instruction and support, ignores child who struggles, makes no adaptations for children with special needs).	Teacher: • **Occasionally** shows awareness of individual needs of children by checking for understanding of concepts and providing minimal support.	Teacher: • Looks for children who are having difficulty and gives them help (with or without specific requests for help) **OR** • Looks for children who are not challenged and gives them developmentally appropriate activities or questions to keep them engaged.	Teacher: • Looks for children who are having difficulty and gives them help (with or without specific requests for help) **AND** • Looks for children who are not challenged and gives them developmentally appropriate activities or questions to keep them engaged

TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS (TLM)			
	1	**2**	**4**
Children <u>engage</u> with the following materials. *(The list of materials for each type are examples only. Any materials used for the*	**No materials present**	**Materials present <u>BUT</u> children do not use them**	**Materials are present <u>AND</u> children use them**

activity, regardless of whether listed here, or whether purchased/made/found, can be counted.)					
18.	**Writing utensils** *(pencils, pens, crayons, chalk)*				
19.	**Educational toys or math materials** *(bottle caps, dice, water, beads, rocks, abacus, materials used for counting or sorting, puzzles, games)*				
20.	**Texts** *(books with pictures (younger grades), text, etc., including those made by the teacher)*				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
		1-25% of present learners (1:4 ratio)	26-50% of present learners (1:2 ratio)	51-75% of present learners (3:4 ratio)	76-100% of present learners (1:1 ratio)
21.	**Number of complete books in the room in the <u>language of instruction</u>** (see definition in manual for 'complete' books; count multiple copies of the same titles separately)				

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Global Child Learning Metric G4-OC-4.2

Learner Survey (SS) Tool

LEARNER INFORMATION

Information for this sheet will be entered before the interview

a.	Country	
b.	School ID	
c.	Class (or Class ID)	
d.	Date of Interview	
e.	Enumerator ID	
f.	Learner's gender	1=boy 0=girl

Safe Learning Environment (SLE)				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. I feel safe traveling to and from school.	I do not feel safe	I feel somewhat safe	I feel quite safe	I feel very safe
2. I feel safe at school.	I do not feel safe	I feel somewhat safe	I feel quite safe	I feel very safe
3. I feel welcome at school.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Educational Content and Teaching Methodology (ECTM)				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
4. My teacher(s) tells positive stories about girl characters, such as girls that are leaders.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
5. My teacher(s) tells positive stories about boy characters, such as boys that are leaders.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
6. My homework assignments require me to interact with my community (interview my community members, write stories about home, measure my family's farm plot for math, etc.)	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
7. What I learn in school helps me in my daily life.	It does not help me	It helps me somewhat	It helps me quite a bit	It helps me very much
Child-Centered Processes (CCP)				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
8. We work in small groups or pairs during class.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
9. My teacher(s) encourage me to ask questions at school.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
10. We have time to practice new concepts in class (beyond simply listening to the teacher/ copying down notes).	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Supportive Caregivers (SG)				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
11. My parents or caregivers ask me about my schoolwork.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
12. Someone in my household reads to or with me	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
13. My parents/caregiver have talked to my teacher about my performance in school	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
	1		**4**	
14. My parents/caregiver speak the same language as the language of instruction	No		Yes	

Supportive Teachers (ST)				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
15. My teacher(s) helps me to do better at school.	Teacher(s) helps me	Teacher(s) helps me some of the time	Teacher(s) helps me most of the time	Teacher(s) helps me all the time
16. When a learner in the classroom is struggling or falling behind, my teacher(s) tries to help them.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
17. The girls' toilets/latrines in my school are open during the school day.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
18. The boys' toilets/latrines in my school are open during the school day.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
19. Girls help to clean the toilets/ latrines in my school.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
20. Boys help to clean the toilets/ latrines in my school.	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
	1	**3**		**4**
21. Toilets/ latrines in my school are accessible for the youngest learners and those with disabilities	**NOT** accessible for youngest or students with disabilities	Accessible for youngest **OR** students with disabilities		Accessible for **BOTH** youngest and students with disabilities
Dietary Practices				
	1		**4**	
22. Did you eat at home or elsewhere before coming to school this morning?	No		Yes	
23. a Have you been given/served food/meal in school yesterday?	No		Yes	
23 b. Have you been given/served food/meal in school today?	No		Yes	
23 c. Are you given/served food/meal every day in the week at school?	No		Yes	

24. Now I would like to ask you about the type of foods that you ate yesterday during the day and the night. Please tell me all the food that you ate yesterday during the day and the night. (select all that apply)

a. Grain, roots and tubers (e.g. rice, cassava, gari, yam, bulgur, potato, funday, plaintain coco yam, etc.)
b. Legumes and Nuts (e.g. ground nut, beans, cashew etc.)
c. Dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese, cow milk, etc.)
d. Flesh food (meat, fish, chicken, liver/organ meat)
e. Eggs
f. Fruits (e.g. banana, mango, plum, orange, avocado pear, lemon, etc.)
g. Vegetables (e.g. Cassava leaves, potato leaves, okra, cucumber, carrot, tomatoes, etc.)
h. Other foods you ate: please list _____

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
25. In the last 5 days while at school, have you ever been hungry at school for a long time?	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Almost Always
	1		**2**	
26. If yes, did this hunger situation prevent you from participating in class?	No		Yes	

Annex 6: Terms of Reference/Statement of Work for the Evaluation

Terms of Reference for Baseline Study, Mid-Term and Final Evaluation

Catholic Relief Services

Program Name: McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program: MeREECE

Agreement: FFE-657-2019/017-00

Program Period: October 2019- September 2023

Contents

1. Purpose

The double purpose of the terms of reference (TOR) is to describe the methodological requirement for the baseline, midterm and final evaluations *and* to outline the conditions and responsibilities of the consultant(s) who will undertake in Guinea-Bissau these evaluations for the McGovern-Dole project, *Promotion of Educational and Economic Performance in Educative Communities* (Melhoria do Rendimento Escolar e Economico das Comunidades Educativas na Guiné-Bissau), or **MeREECE**. The TOR will also provide the tasks and responsibilities for an external consultant to conduct these evaluations. CRS will engage an independent consultant, following a competitive international bidding process. Assuming a satisfactory work product, the same consultant will be hired for the midterm and final evaluations, thus CRS requests bids for all three evaluations, with a separate budget broken out for each.

Please note this ToR and its annexes are subject to donor approval, and thus may change before contract signing.

The external evaluator should be very familiar with the program Evaluation Plan (Annex 1), and Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) (Annex 2), in addition to the USDA's Food Assistance Indicators and Definitions and its Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. As of publication of these ToR, the project's Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) had not yet been developed but is expected by end October. In the meantime, external evaluators can reference USDA's standard indicator definitions, as needed, in preparing a bid in response to these ToR. All evaluation reports will be reviewed in line with Annex 3: Checklist for Evaluating USDA Evaluation Reports (CRS internal).

2. Background

The **MeREECE** program aims to strengthen the education system in Guinea-Bissau and improve literacy of school-aged children in the regions of Oio, Cacheu,, Quinara,, Bafata and Gabu. CRS will work with its partners, Caritas Guinea-Bissau and Plan International to fully implement the project in 350 elementary schools to reach 199.539 individuals in the five proposed regions.

For more details on the context please refer to the evaluation plan *(Annex 1) section 2), Pages 1 and 2)*

3. Program Evaluation Process

The **MeREECE** evaluation process will involve three phases: a baseline assessment, and both a midterm, and final evaluation. CRS is seeking an individual consultant or a research consulting firm to lead its external evaluation process from baseline to endline. The midterm and final evaluation contracts will be dependent on satisfactory completion of the baseline assessment. The midterm and final evaluations will be re-requisitioned if the baseline does not meet quality standards. The methodology and sampling detailed below may require revision based on the results of the baseline and suggestions from the consulting entity

3.1. Purpose and Scope of the baseline Assessment

The main objective of this baseline is to assess and report on the situation before the beginning of the program. The baseline will seek to verify assumptions and pre-conditions made during project design as

well as provide quantitative and qualitative data on the performance measures and identify potential threats to project implementation. The purpose of the baseline study is to establish a reference point and identify any underlying factors impacting literacy, nutrition and health of school-aged children. The results obtained from this evaluation will serve as a basis for comparison with the mid-term and final evaluations. This baseline data will also be used to adjust the intervention logic of the project against the context if necessary.

Specific performance non-zero value indicators (located in Table 1) will be collected during the baseline. All individual-level data must be disaggregated by gender. Annex 4. CRS Standard Tools contains a Learner Survey and Classroom Observation tool that can assist data collection.

Table 1. Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Standard or Custom	Baseline
Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	Standard #30	0
Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	Standard #31	0
Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #32	0
Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #19	0
Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #20	0
% of learners who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Standard #1	45%
Number of teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #3	0
Number of children who receive 1 or more meals per week that include fruits, vegetables, legumes, and/or animal-sourced proteins in addition to the USDA commodities.	Custom	0
Amount (MT) of fruits, vegetables, legumes, and/or animal-sourced foods provided in addition to the USDA commodities (disaggregate by project versus COGES)	Custom	0
Average learner attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	Standard #2	54%
Number of functional health school clubs created as result of USDA assistance	Custom	0
Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #22	0

Performance Indicator	Standard or Custom	Baseline
Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #23	0
Number of learners receiving deworming medication(s)	Standard #29	0
Number of schools with improved food prep and storage equipment	Custom	0
% of teachers in target schools who attend and teach school at least 80% of scheduled school days per year	Custom	40%
Number of teachers receiving recognition rewards as a result of USDA assistance	Custom	0
Number of teaching materials or tools developed in USDA assistance targeted school	Custom	0
Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #4	0
Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #5	0
Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #6	0
Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #7	0
% of school officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality techniques or tools	Custom	15%
Amount (MT) of staple commodities provided in addition to the USDA commodities (disaggregate by project versus COGES)	Custom	0
Quantity of take-home rations provided (in metric tons) as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #14	0
Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #15	0
Average number of days missed per learner per school year due to learner health issues	Custom	30
Number of learners enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	Standard #9	69,470
Number of individuals participating in group-based savings, micro-finance or lending programs with USDA assistance	FFPr Standard #6	0

Performance Indicator	Standard or Custom	Baseline
Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #16	0
Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #17	0
Number of regional Ministry of Education Administrators and municipal authorities trained in school feeding management	Custom	0
Number of sessions held with Ministry of Education officials for advocacy work and national level	Custom	0
Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #10	0
% increase of the value allocated for basic education by responsible institutions	Custom	0%
Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #12	0
Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar "school" governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #13	0
Number of members of the educational support community (PTA, COGES,) with strengthened capacity to fulfill their roles in educational development	Custom	0
Value of new USG commitments, and new public and private sector investments leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	Standard #11	0
Number of COGES who contribute of fruits, vegetables, legumes and/or animal-sourced proteins per week	Custom	0

3.1.1. Schedule of Baseline Survey Activities

Please refer to the evaluation plan (Annex 1) in section **Calendar of activities** Page 4

3.2. Purpose and Scope of Midterm Evaluation

The **MeREECE** midterm evaluation will be a summative exercise which will consist in examining implementation of program, and providing information and feedback on these, as well as determining the extent of the results achieved. Also, the midterm evaluation will hold after two of implementing helps CRS and stakeholders to learn more about success, to identify obstacles to achieving results and to possibly analyze the first effects of the program.

MeREECE midterm evaluation will apply the same methodology and tools used in the baseline assessment. Midterm findings will also document lessons learned and recommendations for better management and operations. The evaluation will assess progress in the implementation of project

activities using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), to identify the first indications of the impact of the project.

3.2.1. Schedule of Midterm Evaluation

See Evaluation plan in section **Calendar of activities** Page 9.

3.3. Purpose and Scope of the Final Evaluation

The purpose of the final evaluation is to measure overall project performance as well as desired or unintended outcomes observed in the targeted communities. The final study will present a clearer view of the constraints, lessons learned, best practices, opportunities as well as successful aspects of the project's implementation. Evaluation criteria will cover the DAC criteria of relevance and effectiveness of project strategies, the efficiency of project interventions, and the extent to which objectives have been achieved. The evaluation will also assess sustainability including: the targeted communities' capacity and willingness to take over project activities (e.g. school feeding); APEs' motivation for maintenance of school infrastructures and resources and; stakeholder engagement to maintain the benefits of the project. The final evaluation will be based on the same key questions presented in the overall evaluation design and will include additional questions related to lessons learned and recommendations made by key stakeholders (beneficiaries, MoE, MoH, implementing partners, USDA, etc.).

3.3.1. Schedule of Final Evaluation

See Evaluation plan in section **Calendar of activities** Page 10.

4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

Information in this section, and in Annex 1, outline the standards expected of the external evaluator during data collection and analysis. Justified deviations from these standards, after consultation with CRS, are possible.

The selected consultant or team is expected to determine the best approach and methods that will be used in these evaluations to effectively address all stated evaluation objectives. CRS will provide quality assurance to ensure the evaluation consultant or team use(s) a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative literacy assessments for learners and health; knowledge, attitudes and practices assessments for teachers and; qualitative focus group discussions and key informant interviews with program beneficiaries and stakeholders.

CRS, as an agency, is attempting to standardize tools used in its education sector projects and had developed a Classroom Observation tool and Learner Survey (see Annex 3. CRS Standard Tools). Some of the content in these tools are likely good proxies for measuring a few of the project's IPTT indicators. In addition, CRS can share tools used in evaluation its seven ongoing McGovern-Dole awards.

4.1. Sources of Data and Data Collection Methods

The data collection methodology will be based on evaluation standards and will be repeated during the different evaluations. However, the standard methods will be adjusted to align with project strategies and to improve data quality. The project team will collect questionnaire-based quantitative data (with learners, teachers, school administrators, cooks) using electronic tools. CRS will use structured and/or semi-structured key informant interview guides to gather information from implementing partners, USDA, opinion leaders and local authorities as well as focus group discussion guides to obtain qualitative information from community groups (APE, COGES, and savings and internal lending communities). In

addition, observation instruments (e.g. checklists) on the preparation of meals and the diversity of foods consumed by learners will be used to triangulate with survey and focus group data. CRS and the evaluation team will adapt and use ASER[63] and PASEC [64] tools to assess learners' reading levels.

4.1.1. Data Collection Methods:

Representative samples should always be selected randomly, ideally from a list or using a random walk, etc. However, often due to resource constraints, sample selection bias does occur. This frequently happens due to security constraints that prevent study teams from reaching an off-limits area or when the rosters from which individuals or clusters are randomly selected are outdated, and it would prove too costly or impossible to locate those randomly selected. In this case, in the limitations section of the evaluation report, describe any sources of bias as best as possible.

For example, if learners are not present in school the day of evaluation, how do absent learners differ from those present? Does a t-test of means show that the proportion of key groups (gender, ethnicity, geographic area)[65] in the sample is the same as those that were not included? If not, how might the sample be biased? How else might learners not present that day be different? Might they not perform as well on literacy tests, etc. because they might frequently miss school?

Sample weights. Sample weights should always be used when providing unconditional descriptive statistics (means or totals) for the underlying population. However, results from regression analyses, would ideally report unweighted and weighted results, and where there are differences, include a discussion of the underlying reasons. For example, observations from a school that has 90 second-graders vs. 30 will carry three times the weight; if there are heterogenous project effects for large vs. small schools (e.g. larger schools have a higher teacher/ learner ratio; this lack of learner attention results in poorer educational outcomes, etc.) then the conditional means might be different for weighted vs. unweighted analyses (Solon, Haider, and Wooldridge 2015).

Clustered or stratified samples and regression analysis. When reporting weighted conditional means from regression analyses, weighted values should use the appropriate weighted counterpart (e.g. weighted least squares, weighted maximum likelihood, etc.).

Additionally, because observations within a cluster are likely correlated, standard errors should always be clustered at the cluster-level (Cameron and Miller 2015). Statistical packages have functions for this; the appropriate function will vary depending on the method of analysis.

Control for any sample stratification in regression analyses by using binary variables for each stratum (excluding one to avoid the dummy variable trap).

Population Proportional to Size (PPS) cluster selection may not appropriate. PPS is a quantitative sample selection methodology commonly used to account for the size of clusters when selecting them in the first stage of evaluation studies, in which every person in every cluster has an equal probability of being selected into the sample. If, in the second stage, a simple random sample is used to select each individual among all individuals in the cluster, then the sample is "self-weighting" and no sample weights need be applied at the analysis stage.

[63] Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)
[64] Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC)
[65] The analyst may not have much information about learners not present. However, based on leaner names and school locations, they might at least have this information.

Analysts of data collected via a PPS-selected sample should understand that if the sample was stratified, or if a simple random sample was not used in the second stage, then the sample is not self-weighting and sample weights must be used. Please refer to section 3, P3 for further details on the sampling methodology of the project

At the analysis stage, the Hansen-Hurwitz or Horvitz-Thompson estimators should be used to estimate the sample mean, and variance in any regression models (Hansen and Hurwitz 1942, Horvitz and Thompson 1952).

When using PPS, the measure of size should be accurate, otherwise it will over- or underestimate the sample variance, as compared to simple random selection of clusters (Thomsen, Tesfu, and Binder 1986), despite using the estimators described below. Even if baseline measures of size are accurate, if using a repeated cross-section (schools are commonly maintained across all three evaluation points) when evaluating in the same clusters at final evaluation and the "size" of the clusters changes notably over time, the same issue of mis-estimating the sample variance will occur.

For all these reasons, using PPS is likely too complex and not appropriate, and therefore not recommended. In lieu of PPS, clusters and individuals can be selected via a random sample, and sample weights used in analysis.

4.1.2. Data Collection Sources and Ideal Sample Sizes

Please see section 3, sampling sub-section, in Annex 1.

4.2. Data Processing and Analysis Procedures

To meet expectations as to how evaluation data can be useful, CRS will engage the recruited evaluation team to determine how to ensure data quality through a quality control system. Data analysis should be descriptive in that it will provide trends (central and dispersion trends, rate, Percentage) in the achievement of results at each measurement period. Because these evaluations will employ representative samples, the significance of the estimators (indicators) will be verified using inferential statistical methods.

The mid-term and final evaluations should, at minimum, check for statistical differences between baseline and respective report values. This will likely be via a t-test; however, a preferred general specification would be:

$$Outcome_{its} = Midterm_t + Final_t + Female_i + Strata_s + \varepsilon_{its}$$

where

- $Outcome_{its}$ is the outcome indicator of interest for individual *i* at time *t* (baseline, midterm, or final) in strata *s*;
- $Midterm_t$ is a binary variable taking the value 1 if the data was collected during the midterm evaluation, and zero otherwise;
- $Final_t$ is a binary variable taking the value 1 if the data was collected during the final evaluation, and zero otherwise (only relevant at final evaluation);
- $Female_i$ is a binary variable taking the value 1 if individual *i* is female, and zero otherwise;
- $Strata_s$ is a vector of binary variables for each stratum (excluding one to avoid the dummy variable trap);
- ε_{its} is the error-term that should be clustered at the cluster-level during analysis.

Ideally, a table with each indicator of interest could be presented per row, with the coefficient (or marginal value when using probit/ logit models) and standard errors for the midterm, final, and female

indicators in columns. It is not necessary to present marginal values per stratum. The specification can be adapted if the outcome indicator is not at the individual level, not stratified, or not clustered.

5. Audience and Key Stakeholders

CRS will organize sessions to disseminate findings at the local and national level. These sessions will allow the team to present conclusions and gather feedback and interpretation of the data collected from beneficiaries and other key stakeholders. These information-sharing sessions will involve learners, teachers, school administrators, community-based educational support associations (APE, COGES), local leaders, technical partners, government representatives and USDA representatives. Online information-sharing sessions in the form of webinars will be organized to gather feedback from key stakeholders. CRS will work with implementing partners and other stakeholders to develop recommendations and an action plan related to the evaluation findings. McGovern-Dole project managers will develop concrete next steps for each recommendation, identify responsible parties for each action, and create a timeline for responsible parties to verify completion of each element of the action plan. The action plan will be reviewed at quarterly project meetings.

6. Selection of the Evaluation Team

All evaluations will be conducted by an external independent consulting firm or individual evaluator in coordination with CRS's regional and national MEAL technical advisors and the CRS Program Quality Department. CRS will advertise the ToR for the baseline, midterm and final evaluations together and recruit one consultant or firm to conduct all three studies. The firm will be selected following a competitive, transparent and independent procurement process conducted by CRS procurement team.

The proposal will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Soundness of the technical approach;
- Practicality of the methodologies proposed;
- Timeframe;
- Cost Efficiency and;
- Evaluation consultant qualifications (see below)

7. Evaluator's Qualifications

The expected consultants and/or firm should have strong experience with education programming and evaluations including, in the domains of health and nutrition and school feeding programs. The team should at least be composed of a lead consultant and an associate consultant with the profile below:

Lead consultant

- Advanced degree in social sciences or any related background
- A minimum of 5 years of experience in conducting quantitative and qualitative impact and performance evaluations in similar complex international development programs.
- Experience in conducting research and evaluation of US government international development programs. Preference will be given to those who have experience in USDA McGovern-Dole Food for Education programs.
- Experience in designing or evaluating education, literacy and school feeding programs.
- Experience in designing, using and analyzing international literacy assessments such as PASEC and/or ASER.

- Experience in qualitative evaluation techniques such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and case studies.
- Experience in quantitative data collection, statistics/econometrics such as randomized control trials, propensity score matching, regression discontinuity, sample size selection, design effects, questionnaire design, etc.
- Experience evaluating programs in West Africa, preferably Guinea-Bissau.
- Ability to communicate, read, and write fluently in English, Portuguese and other languages as appropriate.
- Willingness to work in remote areas without electricity and running water.

Associate consultant:

- MSC in statistics, Program Evaluation and Measure, international development or related background.
- Experience and knowledge in the use of electronic data collection tools in evaluations
- Background in statistics and evaluation methods that use counterfactual and experimental/quasi-experimental approach, cohort analysis experience will also appreciate.
- Experience in data processing, analysis and reporting
- Strong proficiencies in English and Portuguese are required

8. Evaluation Management

CRS MEAL Technical Advisor, Head of Program, and Deputy Head of Programs (all based in Dakar, Senegal) will led and oversee the evaluation management. They will be supported by teams from WARO and CRS HQ in Baltimore, Maryland. The CRS Operations and Human Resources departments located in CRS' Senegal office will be responsible for contracting external evaluation consultants and other service providers and will work with the **MeREECE** program team, including the Chief of Party and MEAL Manager, to coordinate logistics of data collection in the field. Project partners will participate in the ToR review, data collection supervision, review of draft reports and stakeholder workshops on evaluation design and sharing of results and recommendations.

9. Deliverables

The recruited Consultant shall deliver the following products in accordance with the validated timeline:

The evaluator is expected to follow American Evaluation Association's Guiding Principles for Evaluators (http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=51). Dependent upon participants in the evaluation, the evaluator should specify steps that will be taken to ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and protection of minors. The evaluator should specify steps taken to safeguard data collected and data management procedures to be used in the evaluation. There will be a data rights clause in the signed contract, and the external evaluator should obtain permission from CRS before sharing the final evaluation report with any external party, including posting it to their organization's website.

All deliverables should be completed in English (and data collection tools must also be in Portuguese), be free of typos or grammatical errors, and be a polished document ready for submission to USDA. This means the document contains no factual errors or inaccuracies and citations are properly used.

Deliverables include the following:

- Work plan (including evaluator responsibilities for identifying, interviewing, contracting, training and overseeing enumerators).
- Sampling plan, including if the sample sizes will differ from Annex 1.

- Instruments, data collection manual, and training materials for enumerators (i.e., focus group guides, key informant interview guide, observation checklist).
- Quality Assurance Plan (including training of enumerators and weekly check-ins during data collection.
- Conduct interview with USDA (it is expected USDA will facilitate this exercise by providing the contact person and the means of interview)
- Data sets with accompanying codebook/data dictionary (original paper and/or electronic as well as final, clean electronic data sets with syntax).
  - If the evaluator provides .dta, .do, .sps, or .sav files, they must also provide open source file versions (.txt, .csv, .doc, etc.)
  - If pa of a longitudinal design, an identifier file that links respondent PII with ID numbers in the data file(s)
  - Deidentified transcripts of selected interviews and focus groups and/or data files of coded sections of text from interviews and focus groups
- At baseline only, a 10-page preliminary report, suitable for presentation to USDA, 6 weeks after the end of data collection. The report will only contain:
  - An IPTT for the indicators with non-zero baseline values, including relevant disaggregates;
  - Enough information about the methodology to engender confidence in the data quality. This should include a list of the data collection tools, number and gender of people interviewed, any information about stratification, and any data limitations. Whenever possible, the preliminary report should simply refer to the approved ToR and/ or Evaluation Plan, rather than incorporate the information;
  - Annex with description of team members' qualifications and their positionality.
- Draft Report with one round of edits from CRS and another subsequent round from USDA
- Final Report with the following sections:
  - Executive summary (including brief introduction of program evaluated, key evaluation questions, findings, and conclusions);
  - Background;
  - Evaluation questions
  - Evaluation design including assumptions and limitations;
  - Methodology;
  - Findings;
  - Conclusions, lessons learned and effective practices (if any), and
  - Recommendations (should be clear, concise, relevant, specific and practical, following directly from findings and conclusions established in report);
  - Annex with original scope of work (marked for redaction from final web version);
  - Annex with final data collection instruments;
  - Annex with description of team members' qualifications and their positionality;
  - Annex with additional methodological discussion/ robustness checks as needed.
  - Annex with updated IPTT.
  - Final reports must not contain any propriety or personally identifiable information (PII). PII is any information that directly or indirectly identifies an individual. This information can be used on its own or with other information to identify, contact or locate a single person, or to identify an individual in a specific situation. This may include, for example, a name, national ID number, address, birthplace, etc. PII includes both direct and indirect identifiers that, when taken together, could allow for identification of an individual (such as a village name, gender, age, name, and/ or facial image)."
    - In addition, final reports should not allow for the identification of individual schools or communities. Any list of schools or communities provided should be included as in the report annex, so that it can be easily removed before submitting to USDA for external sharing.

- Final reports must be compliant with Section 508 of the United States Access Board which requires that information and services are accessible to persons with disability. (See https//section 508.gov/create).
- A two to four-page summary document, with easily accessible graphics, highlighting the project's key successes, for sharing with a larger audience
- Presentation of final evaluation to stakeholders
- A webinar of key findings and lessons learned for CRS globally and USDA (if requested).

10. Ethical considerations

CRS maintains the highest ethical standards for MEAL policies, especially for evaluations in which some informants are children. CRS will commit to respect and enforce research and evaluation ethical requirements for service providers in accordance with current MEAL Policies and Procedures. Respect for confidentiality and the protection of informants' personal data are essential conditions for all data collection and analysis functions. Therefore, the evaluation team will collect consent from respondents to ensure data privacy protection and responsible ethical considerations in all evaluation and research activities. The evaluation team conducting the assessments will maintain the integrity of the data collection and analysis while also adhering to CRS and USDA policies and procedures on evaluations.

11. Evaluation Resources

CRS and implementing partners will provide to consultant team preparatory, logistical assistance and the following documents.

- MEAL documents and tools such as the project's: results framework, evaluation plan, key performance indicators list, theory of change, learning agenda, existing evaluation reports and case studies (and other available documents as needed)
- Access to a database that includes all 350 schools targeted with demographic and geographical information
- Secondary data available to further understand educational context in Guinea-Bissau;
- Compilation of reference documents (project proposal, periodic reports, etc.)
- Contact details of stakeholders in the implementing zones
- Submitting protocol and compliance information to relevant local and administrative authorities (MoE, MoH, etc.) as needed
- Use of CRS Commd software license, if desired
- Tablets for data collection

12. Structure of Proposal and Submission Guidelines

Consultants or consulting firms wishing to apply to conduct these evaluations should send their CVs, along with a technical proposal that includes at least the following specifications:

- A description of the firm's expertise (maximum 5 pages)
- The different tasks they are planning to undertake in order to fulfill the evaluation's purpose, scope and objectives (2 pages)
- Detailed explanation of the selected methodology (maximum 5 pages)
- A detailed budget with explanatory notes (maximum 5 pages). Bidders must submit a detailed financial proposal for the baseline, midline, and final evaluation, and special study, not exceeding $400,000 for the three data collection points.
- A sample of similar work undertaken as lead consultant(s) (maximum 5 pages)

The proposal should contain no more than a total of 25 pages of which; technical proposal 20 pages and financial proposal 5 pages. The proposals must be submitted **no later 22 October, 2019 at midnight GMT** to SN_HR@.crs.org

Bids for multiple awards. CRS currently also has an open bid for its newly awarded McGovern-Dole project in Togo and understands that some bidders may be interested in bidding for both contracts. The process is run separately in each country program. Applying for both contracts is acceptable, but country programs do consult each other in these processes. Thus, please note the following:

1) Given that timelines overlap, evaluators should clearly demonstrate they have the bandwidth to produce quality evaluations for both countries, either through expected LOE for overlapping staff members; different staff over specified dates; or the use of different study teams altogether.
2) Evaluators that are currently slated to conduct midterm or final evaluations for other CRS country programs during overlapping timeframes should also include clarity around point 1) above.

Table 3. List of Annexes (attached as separate documents)

Annex Number	**Document**
1	MeREECE Evaluation Plan
2	MeREECE Indicator Performance Tracking Table
3	CRS Report Review Template for USDA Evaluations
4	CRS Standard Tools

Annex 7: Description of Team Members' Qualifications and their Positionality

Melanie Phillips, Ph.D.

Dr. Melanie Phillips is a skilled researcher who uses a combination of empirical methods including survey, experiments, and in-depth fieldwork. She has studied the gender dynamics of women's political representation in African countries and has taught graduate-level courses in data analysis and gender and international human rights. Dr. Phillips brings in-depth skills in quantitative data analysis and experience in all phases of the research process. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in Political Science.

Fiona Eichinger

Fiona Eichinger is a technical manager with international experience in project management, education, curriculum development, monitoring, and evaluation since 2016. In her current position and previous role as STS program coordinator, Ms. Eichinger has gathered experience in Malawi, Morocco, Togo, the Philippines, and Nepal. Prior to joining STS, she managed education and social inclusion projects across Europe and the U.S., collaborating with INGOs, local NGOs, government agencies, education institutions, and the private sector.

Ms. Eichinger holds an M.A. in International Relations from Syracuse University, specializing in development and humanitarian assistance. She is professionally proficient in German and Spanish and studies Arabic.

Briona Graham-Clayton

Briona Graham-Clayton is a program coordinator providing key administrative, logistical, technical, and financial management support.

Ms. Graham-Clayton's work in the education sector includes teaching pre-kindergarten, developing social and emotional learning (SEL) interactive radio instruction, and managing training-of-trainers programs. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Guyana, she worked with the ministry of education in developing emergent literacy and SEL curriculums for nursery and lower primary students.

Ms. Graham-Clayton holds a master's degree in international education and training specializing in early childhood development from American University. She also holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Coppin State University.

Annex 8: Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT)

Result	Activity	Performance Indicator	Standard or Custom	Baseline Target	Baseline	Midline Target	Midline
Improved Quality of Literacy Instruction (IR 1.1)	Training: Teachers (Activity 3)	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Standard #1	45%	0.67%	55%	0.91%
Improved Student Attendance (IR 1.3)	Provide school meals (Activity 5)	Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	Standard #2	54%	63.77%	75%	62.49%
More Consistent Teacher Attendance (Sub-IR 1.1.1)	Promote teacher attendance (Activity 1)	Percent of teachers in target schools who attend and teach school at least 80% of scheduled school days per year	Custom	40%	49.63%	70%	62.36%
Increased Skills and Knowledge of School Administrators (Sub-IR 1.1.5)	Training: School administrators (Activity 4)	Percent of school officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality techniques or tools	Custom	15%	75.00%	50%	67.77%
Reduced Health-Related Absences (Sub-IR 1.3.2)	Training: Good health and nutrition practices (Activity 10)	Average number of days missed per student per school year due to student health issues (Due to the constraints caused by school closures in the prior year, obtaining accurate data on student health-related absences for the prior year was challenging.)	Custom	30	3.65	10	3.58
Increased Community Understanding of the Benefits of Education (Sub-IR 1.3.5)	Provide school meals (Activity 5)	Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	Standard #9	69470			