

MIDLINE PROGRAM EVALUATION

MCGOVERN-DOLE INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD NUTRITION III PROJECT



PROGRAM NAME

McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition III Project (MGD III)

LOCATION

Mopti and Koulikoro Regions

TIMELINE

October 2016 - September 2020

IMPLEMENTER

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

EVALUATOR

IMPAQ International (IMPAQ)

PARTNERS

- Ministry of National Education
- Amprode
- Caritas Bamako
- Caritas Mopti
- Education Development Center (EDC)
- Guamina



PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

MGD III is a five-year program designed to improve the literacy, health, and dietary knowledge and practices of school-aged children, as well as reduce health-related absences in the Mopti and Koulikoro regions in Northern Mali.



PROGRAM EVALUATION

IMPAQ is conducting a performance evaluation of the MGD III program using qualitative and quantitative methods to measure changes in key program outcomes over the life of the project. IMPAQ also designed a cohort comparison method to measure the impact of the MGD III balanced literacy approach (BLA) training for teachers on students' literacy outcomes.



46
Schools



2,507
Students
(Grades 1-4)



2,465
Caregivers



89
Teachers
(Grades 1-4)



45
School Management
Committee
Members (SMC)



44
Principals



KEY FINDINGS AT MIDLINE

Objective 1: Literacy

- The proportion of students who demonstrated reading proficiency at grade level **improved** by 11, 13, and 22 percentage points in grades 1, 2, and 3 respectively.
- The percentage of teachers who received BLA training in Grades 1 to 3 **grew** to 100% and 93% in Koulikoro and Mopti, respectively.
- Student's attentiveness **increased** by 10 percentage points, as reported by EDC.

Recommendation: Continue to provide BLA trainings for teachers and target both male and female caregivers to improve school attendance.

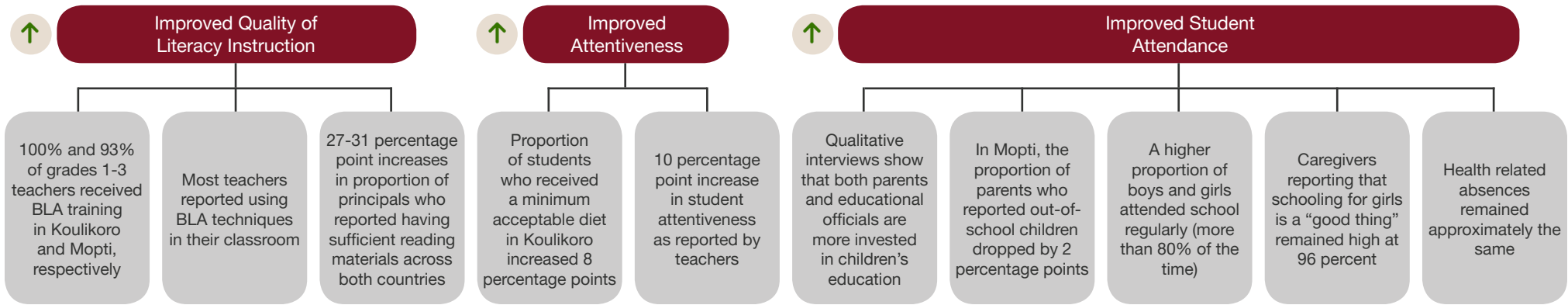
Objective 2: Health Practices

- There was an 8 percentage point **increase** in proportion of students who received a minimum acceptable diet.
- The percentage of school management committee members (SMC) who received program training on safe practices **grew** to 100%.
- The proportion of students who reported washing their hands at critical moments **decreased** by 18 and 19 percentage points in Koulikoro and Mopti, respectively.

Recommendation: Improve awareness among parents and children about basic hygiene practices.

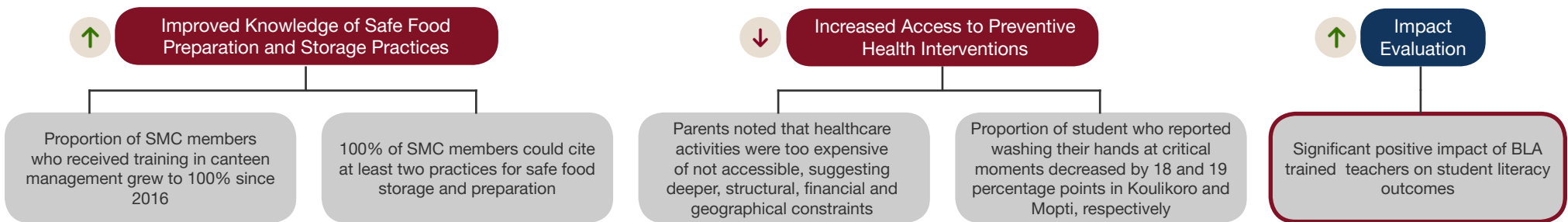
OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE LITERACY OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Significant improvements in student's reading proficiency in grades 1-3: Greater promotion of students in first grade (11 percentage points) could read simple sounds; second grade (13 percentage points) could decode simple words; third grade (22 percentage points) could read simple sentences



“Today many kids are at school because of the canteen food. For example, kids from Kimetogoro have abandoned school because they are obliged to walk long distances to return to their homes for the lunch at noon. Now they all come to school and stay there the whole day because they receive a meal in the afternoon”
-Parent

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASED USE OF HEALTH AND DIETARY PRACTICES



“Before the project, for students to master the alphabet, it took them two years. Now, with the new approach, pupils are able to cite the alphabet during the first quarter of the first grade.”
-County Mayor

LESSONS LEARNED & SUCCESS STORIES

The observed changes in the performance and the impact evaluation data at midline are consistent with the program theory of change. For sustaining and strengthening program impact, the project should closely consider bottlenecks in infrastructure, prevailing attitudes among program beneficiaries, and the set of interventions required to transform the environment in which the project operates. Specifically, the project should consider the following aspects for improved implementation:



- Stakeholders at both the national and local levels highlighted that the relocation of trained teachers could threaten the sustainability of the project’s positive results although the literacy of school-aged children is improving.
- Program staff explained that some teachers and even parents resisted the BLA methods, as they did not believe that these methods would be effective.



- While participants highly appreciated the program activities related to school meals and literacy, they mostly reviewed health, hygiene, and sanitation related activities negatively.
- Several parents and SMC members suggested adding a livelihoods component to support parents with income-generating activities. These activities should enable them to act on their desire to support their children’s education.



- Water availability and access to health centers were identified as significant factors for poor children’s health and dietary practices.
- Participants suggested that the next phase of the project should consider the provision of water sources to increase the impact of a fully functioning vegetable garden supplementing the canteens.