

READING FOR SUCCESS – SMALL SCALE EXPERIMENTATION

2015-2018

FINAL REPORT

Contract No. AID-OAA-I-14-00055, **Task Order No.** AID-608-TO-15-00002

Cover photo: A Grade 1 student reads aloud from the blackboard in front of her class in her school in Bouarafa, Morocco, located in the Oriental province. She sounds out the words by breaking them into syllables, using the phonemic-based approach to reading introduced under Reading For Success — Small Scale Experimentation.

(Credit: Chemonics International)

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CONTENTS

Contents	i
Acronyms	ii
Executive Summary	1
Context and Activity Description	5
A. National Context.....	5
B. RFS – SSE Activity Description.....	7
C. Implementation Philosophy and Approach	9
Key Achievements	11
A. Result 1.....	11
B. Result 2.....	14
Early Grade Reading Assessment	17
A. Study Design, Training, and Data Collection	17
B. Main Findings of the Evaluation (Result 1)	21
C. Main Findings of the Evaluation (Result 2)	23
Sustainability and Scaleup	25
A. RFS – NPR Scaleup and Nationalization of Grade I.....	25
B. Building the Capacity of MNEVT Staff	25
C. Civil Society Collaboration and Capacity Building	26
D. Collaborating with Other USAID Education Projects	26
Lessons Learned and Recommendations	27
A. Lessons Learned.....	27
B. Recommendations.....	29
Snapshots	32
A Summer Reading Program Brings Hope for the Future	32
Happy Students Make Happy Teachers	33
Learning is Best While Having Fun	34
Annex A. Evaluating and Assessing Early Grade Reading	35
Study Design By Evaluation Cycle	35
EGRA Results by Subtasks and Groups: Cohort 1	35
EGRA Results by Subtasks and Groups: Cohort 2.....	36
EGRA Summer Enrichment Program	37
Annex B. Executive Summary in French	38

ACRONYMS

AREF	Regional Academy for Education and Training
CRMEF	<i>Centres Régionaux des Métiers de l'Éducation et de la Formation</i> (Teacher Training Institutes)
CSO	civil society organization
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
MEL	monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MNEVT	Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training
RFS	Reading for Success
RFS – NPR	Reading for Success – National Program for Reading
RFS – SSE	Reading for Success – Small Scale Experimentation
SSME	Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness
STS	School-to-School International

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Morocco has made significant gains in providing nearly universal access to education in the last decade, with net enrollment rates in Grade 1 surpassing 97 percent. However, Moroccan children consistently rank among the lowest achievers on international assessments. In 2015, the USAID-funded research studies on reading in Morocco identified the lack of teacher training and the absence of supplementary reading materials as two of the main factors affecting students' overall reading performance. Recognizing that lifelong learning achievements are built on a solid foundation of early grade reading, the Moroccan government is committed to improving reading performance at the primary level.

The USAID/Morocco Reading for Success (RFS) umbrella project was developed to address the challenges that the Moroccan education system faces in Arabic reading instruction and the system's documented lack of reading results. Following the first research phase of RFS, USAID launched the second phase of RFS: the Reading for Success – Small-Scale Experimentation (RFS – SSE) activity.

From September 2015 to March 2018, Chemonics worked in close partnership with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MNEVT) to implement RFS – SSE. This early grade reading pilot program was designed to develop and test the most effective approaches to strengthening Grade 1 and Grade 2 students' Arabic reading skills in targeted primary schools and focused on the following activities:

- Piloting a new approach to Arabic reading lessons based on the syllabic method — developed and tested via an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) of Grade 1 and Grade 2 students in targeted pilot schools
- Developing new Arabic reading materials in the forms of training and teacher guidebooks, student exercise books, and teacher tool kits to reinforce the new approach in classrooms
- Reducing summer learning loss by supporting civil society organizations (CSOs), funded through RFS – SSE's grants program, to develop summer reading enrichment activities for Grade 1 and Grade 2 students

RFS – SSE supported MNEVT in the design, training, implementation, and evaluation of Arabic reading lessons for Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. From October 2015 to March 2018, the program aimed to strengthen primary grade reading skills by improving instructional methods, teacher and school capacity, and reading enrichment opportunities. With a framework that emphasized experimentation and monitoring, the project employed new teaching methods, evaluated their impact, and adapted the

This phonics-based approach has brought back the child in me! I have been a first grade teacher for 20 years, and forgot how much I loved my job, but this reading method revived this feeling in me.

**— BADIA, GRADE 1 TEACHER
TRAINED BY RFS – SSE**

methods to improve students' performance as readers.

Over the course of two and a half years, RFS – SSE engaged with MNEVT to develop three iterations of revised Grade 1 and Grade 2 Arabic reading materials — a process of continual piloting, testing, and revising. These materials were piloted in 91 primary schools under RFS – SSE across four regions and eight provinces of Morocco: Témara-Skhirat, Kenitra, El Hajeb, Taouanate, Figuig, Oujda Angad, Inezgane et Tiznit. The project worked closely with the MNEVT's Direction of Curricula, the National Center for Evaluation and Examinations (CNEE), the Central Unit for Teacher Education, and MNEVT's regional offices in the selected regions — Regional Academies for Education and Training (AREFs) (see box).

RFS – SSE IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

RFS – SSE Partners

- Curricula Direction
- CNEE
- Central Unit for Teacher Education
- Academies of Rabat-Kenitra, Fes-Meknes, Oriental, and Souss-Massa-Drâa

Subcontractors

- Association Al Jisr
- ALCO Alternative Consultants
- School-to-School International (STS)

Regions of Focus:

- Témara-Skhirat
- Kenitra
- El Hajeb
- Taouanate; Figuig
- Oujda Angad
- Inezgane and Tiznit

Through RFS – SSE, MNEVT staff at all levels participated in developing new phonics-based reading lessons for Grades 1 and 2, teacher guidebooks, trainer guidebooks, teacher pedagogical toolkits, student story booklets, and student exercise books. With MNEVT in the driver's seat, RFS – SSE produced all of these materials under especially tight time limits and budget constraints; each deliverable was of a high quality.

As illustrated in the graphic below (see Exhibit I on page 4), RFS – SSE trained 41 trainers on the phonics-based reading instruction approach, and 334 teachers in the eight pilot provinces. The teachers trained by RFS – SSE used the phonics-based reading instruction approach in the pilot schools, reaching 11,742 total students in 91 schools. Additionally, RFS – SSE trained 259 new education inspectors. This far-sighted action will ensure that all new inspectors fully understand the new reading instruction approach and that they will be well equipped to support the teachers who are implementing it.

RFS – SSE used the EGRA as a tool to establish a baseline of Grade 1 and 2 student learning and reassessed students' progress with two midline assessments and a final endline assessment over the life of the project. Partner School-to-School International (STS) led the EGRA-related work under RFS – SSE. Students who used the revised Arabic reading materials in 46 of the 91 pilot schools were tested using the EGRA, and their learning was compared to that of students in 45 control schools that did not receive the revised Arabic reading materials. Students were exposed to RFS-SSE's phonemic approach to teaching Arabic reading and associated reading materials over a relatively brief period — 18 months for the first cohort of students, and 9 months for the second cohort. Conventionally, students would have several years with new reading materials prior to being tested on their effectiveness. However, even in this limited timeframe, the EGRA Endline results showed statistically significant improvements for the experimental students. As Section III,

Early Grade Reading Assessment, of this report details, the results indicate a positive impact for students exposed to the interventions to build phonemic awareness skills and identify syllables. The development of phonemic awareness skills in young children is an important building block to later success with fluent reading. Similar to phonemic awareness, the ability for young children to identify syllables is predictive of future reading success. Students have to be taught to hear the demarcations of the syllables in a direct, explicit, engaging manner. The syllable knowledge will transfer to reading, spelling, and writing as the child develops further academic skills.

A testament to the project's success, MNEVT sought RFS – SSE's support in an early scaleup of RFS – SSE's phonemic-based approach to the national level for all Grade 1 students across Morocco's 12 regions, an expansion of RFS – SSE's original scope of work to pilot supplementary Arabic reading materials in Grades 1 and 2 in the four pilot regions.

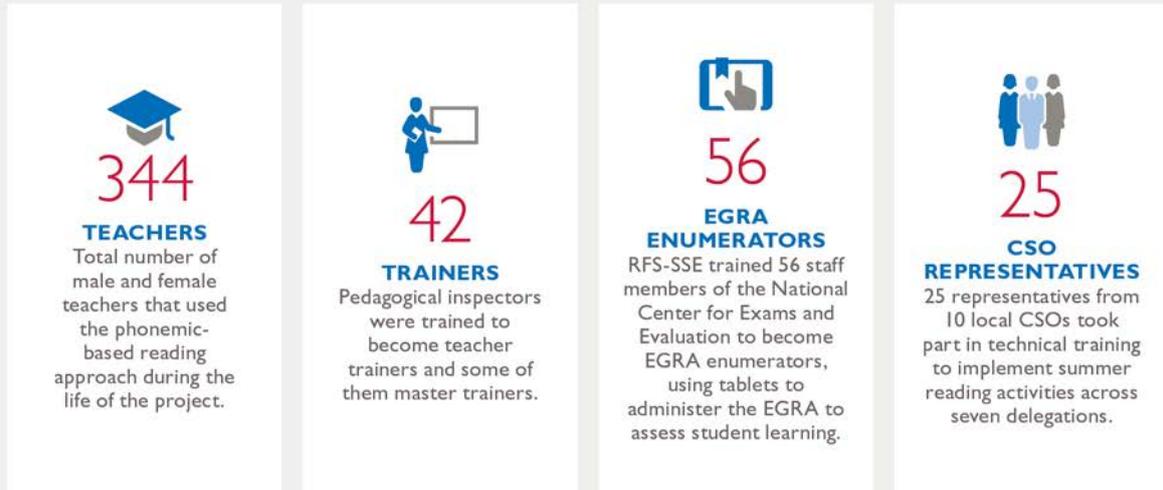
Under Result 2, RFS – SSE engaged with CSOs to implement summer reading enrichment activities in summer 2017. Working with local partner Association Al Jisr, RFS – SSE awarded 10 grants to local CSOs to support summer reading programs and thereby reduce student learning loss over the summer months. The RFS – SSE grants team worked with the CSOs to develop their programs for reading enrichment, delivering a series of workshops for the selected grantees prior to and following implementation of the grants program. These workshops were designed to build the capacity of the grantees to design and manage reading programs, monitor budgets and milestones, and learn from successes and challenges to carry out similar summer reading programs in the future. The CSOs and the student beneficiaries welcomed the program, which mobilized parents and communities around reading instruction. This summer reading program is the first of its kind in Morocco, and it benefited 520 students.

RFS – SSE successfully strengthened the evidence on effective instructional practices for Arabic reading instruction in Moroccan primary schools. In doing so, RFS – SSE has enabled MNEVT to generate data that will lay the groundwork for curricular reform in the near future through programs like the follow-on to RFS – SSE — Reading for Success – National Program for Reading (RFS – NPR) — and other MNEVT-led educational reform programs.

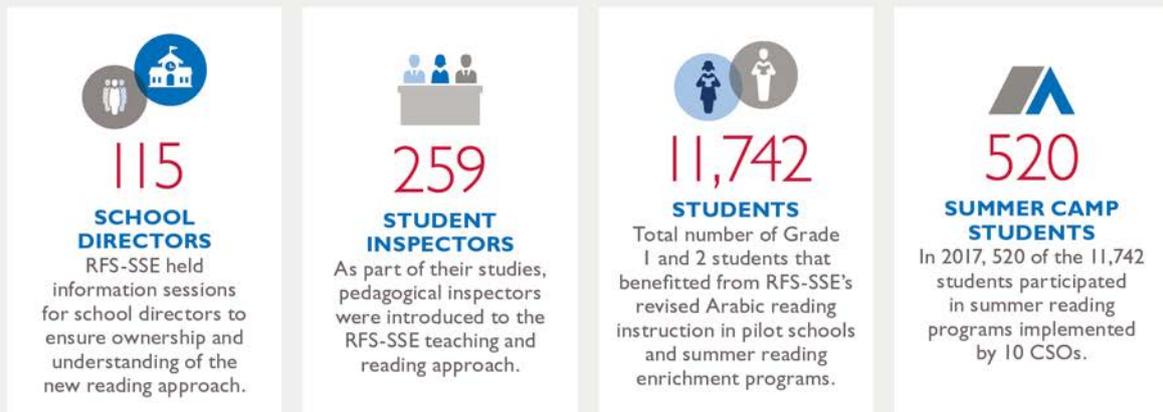
This report provides further background on the context of educational reform in Morocco, the project's activities under Results 1 and 2, and RFS – SSE's successes and lessons learned.

Exhibit I. RFS – SSE’s Key Results

TRAINED BY RFS-SSE



OTHER RFS-SSE BENEFICIARIES



READING MATERIALS PRODUCED



SECTION I

CONTEXT AND ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

A. NATIONAL CONTEXT¹

A1. The Moroccan Government's Reform Efforts in Education

The USAID/Morocco Reading for Success (RFS) umbrella project was designed to respond to the challenges that the Moroccan education system faces in Arabic reading instruction and a documented lack of reading results. MNEVT recognizes that reading is a foundational skill and the basis of learning in other subjects, and the gap between those with poor and good reading skills continues to widen as readers advance through primary school and into middle school. In addition, MNEVT understands that children who do not read well at the primary level often make only limited educational progress throughout their lives and are at a higher risk for dropping out of school than those who read well.

To address these challenges, the Moroccan government has undertaken four significant reform efforts within the formal education sector. These reform efforts are:

- A. The National Education Charter and Education Emergency Plan (1999-2012)
- B. Government Plan “Plan du Gouvernement” (2012-2016)
- C. Vision 2030 and Interim Priority Measures
- D. The new Law for Inclusive Education

Two of the above reform efforts contributed to the design of the USAID/Morocco RFS – SSE activity, led by USAID in collaboration with MNEVT. The strategic policy reform known as “Vision 2030” was designed in response to the king’s speech on August 20, 2013, which centered on the challenges in the education sector. After a change in ministry leadership in 2013 and the reconstitution of the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research, MNEVT launched a massive consultative process to feed into the development of new educational reform. More than 102,000 people — including educators, parents, and students — participated. Along with an accompanying sector assessment conducted by the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research, MNEVT developed Vision 2030, a 15-year reform effort to develop a new approach to education, and Interim Priority Measures for the first five years. The Interim Priority Measures constitute a three- to five-year effort to make needed reforms that can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

The policy reform encompasses 23 “priority projects” grouped around nine themes, including: 1) increasing reading competencies in the early grades of primary

1. Much of the information in Sections A1 and A2 of this report is based on USAID’s RFTOP No. SOL-608-15-000007, Reading for Success – Small Scale Experimentation Project for Morocco under the Assistance to Basic Education All Children Reading (ABE ACR) IDIQ, issued June 12, 2015.

education through improved instructional materials, 2) establishing a teacher coaching system, 3) improving student assessment, and 4) offering learning enrichment activities outside school hours. In part, the plan responds to the king's emphasis on providing children with "the necessary linguistic skills so that they may fully benefit" from instruction throughout schooling.

The USAID/Morocco RFS – SSE, the second phase of the USAID/Morocco RFS umbrella project, has complemented MNEVT's major reform efforts in education. RFS – SSE included activities that ranged from piloting and assessing new reading materials to national scaleup of Grade 1 materials developed by RFS – SSE. Through RFS – SSE, a new Arabic reading approach was developed and tested between late 2015 and early 2018. MNEVT is currently drawing on these results as it plans curriculum reform to ensure that interventions are evidence-based and strategic.

A2. Morocco's Formal Primary Education Context

In terms of learning achievement, Morocco is behind other lower-middle income countries, and it has nearly the lowest overall literacy rate in the Middle East and North Africa region. The sixth general census in Morocco has revealed that 8.5 million people are illiterate. According to a report drafted by the High Commissioner for the Project of Statistical Studies on the Population, almost 32 percent of the population above 10 years old cannot read and write. Although the official literacy rates for male and female youth are 87 percent and 72 percent, respectively,² these numbers hide significant disparities in literacy between populations in Morocco's rural and urban areas. Targeted literacy studies point to an illiteracy rate of more than 51 percent for rural girls³. Based on enrollment and literacy data, the United Nations Development Programme considers Morocco to be 15 years behind Tunisia, 10 years behind Algeria, and five years behind Egypt in terms of overall educational outcomes.⁴

Primary school runs for six years in Morocco, and children generally start at 6 years old. Modern Standard Arabic is the official teaching language, but most children come to school speaking either colloquial Arabic (Darija) or one of the Amazigh languages and its regional variations. Darija varies among regions and has no written codification. Amazigh uses its own alphabet, called "Tifinagh," which is not Arabic or Latin.

A National Analysis of Student Performance conducted by the Higher Council of Education, Training and Scientific Research (a research and watchdog organization reporting directly to the king) showed that only 24 percent of students in Grade 4 and 36 percent of students in Grade 6 possess the basic reading skills mandated in the national curriculum. According to the study, less than 32 percent of students could read at grade level. At all four grade levels examined in the study, girls outperformed boys in reading but not in the other subject areas. This national study hypothesizes that girls better mastered the various reading subskills than their male peers. The study also associates the causes of poor levels of literacy with a multitude of factors, including a weak reference framework for reading skills (standards and benchmarks), a rigid and overloaded curriculum that does not respond to children's needs,

2. UNESCO 2011, including the Education for all 2000 Assessment.

3. Direction de la Lutte Contre L'Analphabestisme (DLCA), Ministry of Education, 2011.

4. World Bank Report No: 52749-MA, April 20, 2010.

inadequate reading assessment tools, a school environment un conducive to learning, and the persistence of inequality in access to school and education opportunities.⁵

B. RFS – SSE ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

While MNEVT endeavors to implement reforms laid out in Vision 2030 — the government’s 15-year educational reform plan including Priority Interim Measures for the period of 2015 to 2020 — USAID’s RFS program is augmenting that work.

As the second phase of RFS, RFS – SSE was designed as an experimental project to empower MNEVT to develop and test the most effective approaches to strengthening children’s Arabic reading skills in targeted primary schools. MNEVT staff at all levels were engaged by RFS – SSE in the design, training, implementation, and evaluation of Arabic reading lessons for Grades 1 and 2. From October 2015 to March 2018, the program aimed to strengthen primary grade reading skills by improving instruction methods, teacher and school capacity, and reading enrichment opportunities. With a framework that emphasizes experimentation and monitoring, the project employed new teaching methods, evaluated their impact, and adapted the methods to improve students’ performance in reading.

To pilot this approach, RFS – SSE worked closely with MNEVT to select eight provinces in four regions of Morocco that best corresponded to the country’s geographical differences. Within the eight provinces, 90 intervention and 45 control schools were selected to participate in the pilot activity.⁶ The project collaborated with academic researchers from *Université Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah* in Fes and Moroccan consulting firm ALCO Alternative Consultants in the initial stages of the project, including work planning activities and the first lesson plan development workshop. RFS – SSE also collaborated with expert early grade reading, materials development, and teacher training consultants from the region, including Dr. Hanada Taha, Dr. Andrew Smart, Ms. Rima Alkurdi, and Mr. Abdelaziz Jerbi.

In its first year, RFS – SSE focused on Result 1: “Effectiveness of supplemental Arabic reading lessons on student reading competencies tested for grades one and two.” Although the RFS – SSE task order’s initial scope of work only referenced the development of supplemental Arabic reading materials, the scope of work was expanded to include the primary Arabic reading lessons for Grades 1 and 2 rather than supplementary materials. This change in Result 1’s scope was in response to requests from MNEVT and USAID⁷. Based on international best practices and Moroccan expertise, RFS – SSE introduced the phonemic method for teaching reading, which treats individual syllables and sounds as the building blocks of basic reading skills. By focusing on individual sounds, students learn how to decode and understand letters, words, and phonemes. This method of teaching reading differs starkly from what is currently the more prevalent method of teaching reading in Morocco, which is limited to teaching via the rote memorization of words rather

5. National Analysis of Student Performance Report, May 2009, Higher Council for Education.

6. Originally, there were 90 pilot schools. In October 2016, however, an additional school was added to the pilot, bringing the total number of pilot schools to 91. Future references in this report will refer to the “91 total intervention schools.”

7. RFS – SSE Task Order Modification 6 references the scaleup of the “Grade 1 Arabic reading lessons across the country,” the change was a continuation of RFS – SSE’s work on the Arabic reading lesson plans (not limited to supplemental materials).

than teaching children to decode words by breaking them down into syllables and sounds. In its first year, RFS – SSE made significant achievements under Result 1, developing the first version of revised Arabic reading materials and testing the effectiveness of this new approach and the impact on students' reading competencies in Grades 1 and 2. In its second year, RFS – SSE pivoted to focus on teacher training and support, evaluation, and the feedback loop to improve materials revision.

During Year 2 of the project, RFS – SSE continued to focus on the implementation and improvement of materials and associated training under Result 1 as well as the introduction of summer reading enrichment activities under Result 2: “Summer reading enrichment activities tested for reducing learning loss among Grade 2 children in target schools.” RFS – SSE launched a grants program to fund summer reading activities and assessed the program's impact on reducing summer learning loss among students in Grades 1 and 2. The summer reading grants program was implemented in collaboration with RFS – SSE partner Association Al Jisr, a Moroccan CSO with expertise in working with local community-based organizations across Morocco.

The small grants component worked with 10 CSOs across seven provinces in Morocco to implement summer reading enrichment activities. Among the 10 CSOs, more than 520 students participated in the summer reading grants program.

The achievements under Result 1 culminated in MNEVT's decision, under new leadership, to scale up RFS – SSE's phonemic-based approach to the national level for all Grade 1 students across Morocco's 12 regions. RFS – SSE has contributed to and paved the way for institutional changes that fall under the ongoing MNEVT primary educational reform known as “Vision 2030.” In May 2017, USAID awarded the third phase of RFS — RFS – NPR — to Creative Associates International. The decision to continue the RFS mandate through the national program is a positive step toward meaningful educational reform in Morocco and attests to the important work that RFS – SSE has successfully undertaken with this pilot program.

At the start of Year 3, RFS – SSE primarily focused on helping scale up the phonemic-based approach to Arabic reading for Grade 1 students on a national level. In addition, RFS – SSE continued to pilot the revised Grade 2 materials in the 91 intervention schools. To achieve Result 2, RFS – SSE focused on the evaluation of and reporting on the summer reading grants program in Year 3. RFS – SSE also convened a final workshop for the 10 CSOs, which implemented the grants, to capture lessons learned and support the future sustainability of similar summer reading programs the grantees might carry out after RFS – SSE.

For RFS – SSE, as an experimental project, monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) was a crosscutting theme and critical practice. In addition to the quantitative and qualitative monitoring RFS – SSE conducted, the project implemented a longitudinal Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). A Baseline assessment, two Midline assessments, and one Endline assessment were completed under Result 1 to measure learning gain over a full academic year and a half. Under Result 2, to test for learning loss (or the lack thereof) during the 2017 summer months, a Baseline and Endline EGRA assessment were conducted on a select number of students participating in the summer reading grants program. The main EGRA-related findings

are discussed in Chapter 3 of this report. During the life of the project, the following EGRA-related activities were accomplished.

- EGRA enumerators training (January 2016)
- Grade 1 data collection Baseline (February 2016)
- EGRA enumerator refresher training (May 2016)
- Grade 1 data collection Midline 1 (May 2016)
- EGRA enumerator refresher training (September 2016)
- Grade 1 and Grade 2 Baseline/Midline 2 data collection (October 2016)
- EGRA enumerator refresher training (May 2017)
- Grade 1 and Grade 2 EGRA Endline data collection (May and June 2017)
- Summer Baseline data collection (June 2017)
- EGRA enumerators refresher training (September 2017)
- Summer Endline data collection (September 2017)

C. IMPLEMENTATION PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH

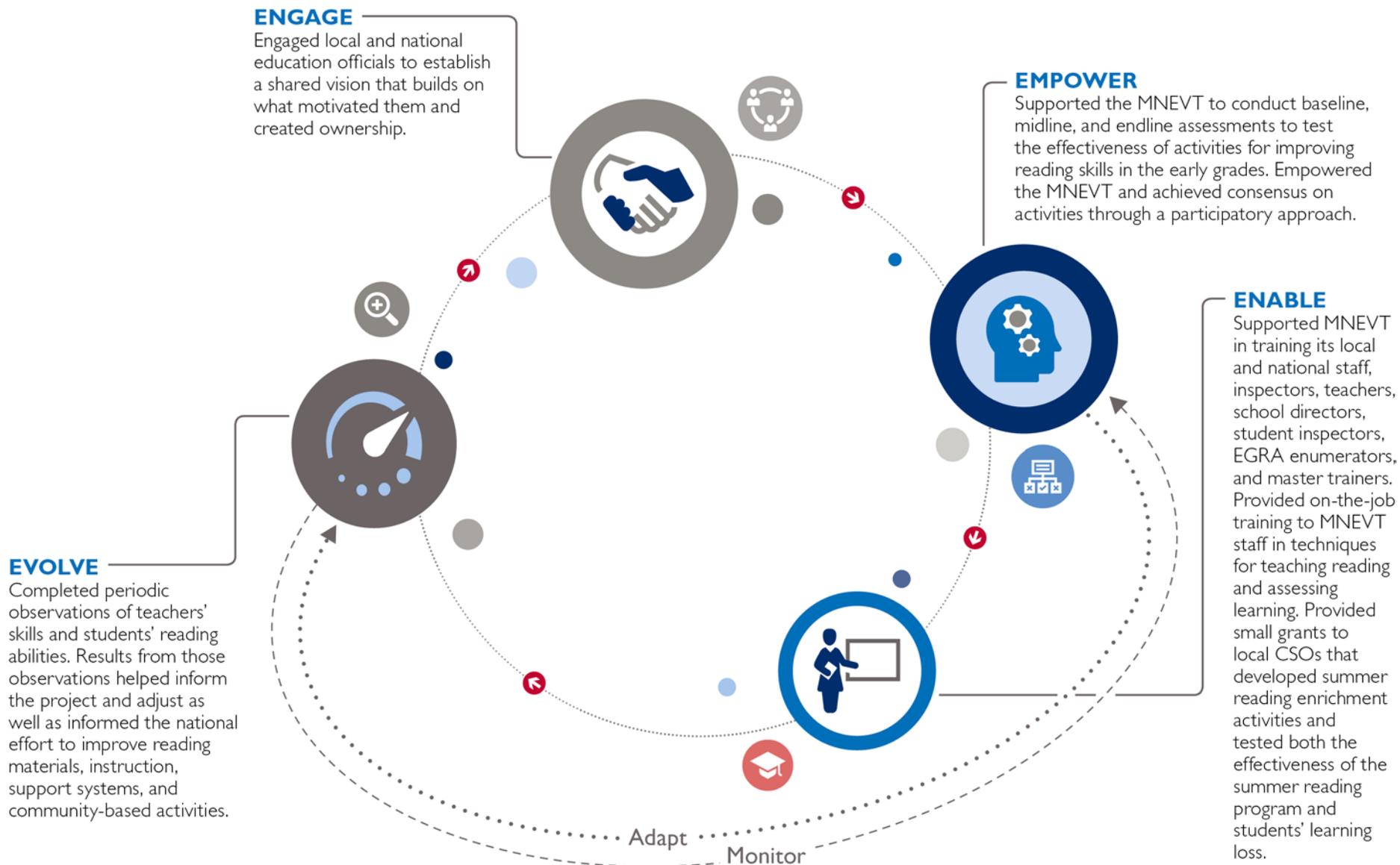
RFS – SSE used a facilitative approach, working hand in hand with MNEVT, advising the ministry and providing it with operational support to strengthen its capacity to achieve the intended results (see Exhibit 2 on next page). Project implementation succeeded because RFS – SSE empowered MNEVT staff at every step of the way. From project design and implementation to evaluation, MNEVT staff were active in introducing and facilitating the new reading approach. RFS – SSE recognizes that building MNEVT's capacity to design, implement, and analyze assessments has been key to producing actionable and sustainable results. Throughout the life of the project, the facilitative approach encouraged participation, not just input. By consistently placing MNEVT in the “driver’s seat,” RFS – SSE enabled MNEVT to take increasing ownership of a nationally scaled early grade reading program. RFS – SSE’s facilitative approach continued to evolve based on continuous monitoring and feedback, ensuring maximum impact and scalability.

What makes Chemonics’ performance exceptional is the high level of efficiency and professionalism in producing highly complex materials ... while coaching the Ministry staff and keeping them in the lead, all this in a record time and under high political pressure from the Moroccan Government.

— Contracting Officer’s Representative Mariam Britel-Swift, RFS – SSE

Under the scope of Result 2, RFS – SSE collaborated with the 10 selected CSOs to implement the summer reading activities through small grants. The nature of the collaboration was new for many of the CSOs, as it was their first time working on a USAID-funded program. Each CSO was eager to learn and adapt its management to conform to USAID rules and regulations. The RFS – SSE team met with the grantees on several occasions as they designed and implemented their programs, allowing the team to hear grantees’ concerns; identify their capacity building needs; discuss their visions for the summer reading programs; and brainstorm with grantees on how to develop reading activities, implement them, and draw on lessons learned.

Exhibit 2. RFS – SSE's Implementation Philosophy and Approach



SECTION II

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

A. RESULT I

In its first year, RFS – SSE focused on Result I: Developing and testing the effectiveness of new Arabic reading lessons and their impact on student reading competencies in Grades 1 and 2. To achieve this major objective, RFS – SSE completed a series of development and validation workshops and activities related to capacity building, reading materials production and revision, and MEL.

The development of Arabic reading materials for Grades 1 and 2, as noted above, was based on international best practices and Moroccan expertise. Using the phonemic method introduced by RFS – SSE, students learned how to focus on individual sounds to decode and understand letters, words, and phonemes. During every step of this process, RFS – SSE consistently involved MNEVT and enabled it to take ownership of the process, an overarching accomplishment for RFS – SSE. Because of MNEVT’s involvement in this process and because all parties of the ministry — including new leadership within the ministry — bought into the process, the nationalization of the reading materials by the MNEVT happened a year earlier than originally planned, supported by RFS – SSE and the follow-on project, RFS – NPR.

This key accomplishment has only been possible because there has been a change in the mindsets of ministry officials with whom the project has worked over the past two years. It is not simply the officials’ acceptance of the approach to reading instruction but also their understanding of the rationale for the changes in the curricula that indicates the officials’ commitment and change. This commitment to change is best exemplified in the types of stories and texts that have been introduced through the revised curricula. Previously, textbooks were filled with archaic and difficult language. The prevailing view was that if instructional texts were not difficult and did not impress certain morals on student readers, they could not learn from those texts. The texts used as part of the revised curricula are short, fun, and age appropriate. As ministry officials have observed this curricula implemented in classrooms, they have seen the value of students learning to read texts they want to read and can read on their own.

A1. Capacity Building Through Training

To implement the approach to strengthening reading instruction and train teachers in targeted schools during the life of the project, RFS – SSE significantly emphasized capacity building and organized training on standard and technical capacity building, including training on monitoring. (This report elaborates on training in relation to evaluation in Chapter 3.) Training on standard and technical capacity building included the following sessions:

- Training of trainers (January 2016)
- Training of teachers (February 2016)
- Supplemental teacher training (May 2016)
- Model lesson demonstration (May 2016)
- Training of trainers (August 2016)
- Training of teachers (October 2016)
- Supplemental training of trainers (December 2016)
- Supplemental teacher training (February 2017)

- Grantee RFA information workshops (February 2017)
- Classroom observation tool workshop (March 2017)
- Grants program development workshop (March 2017)
- Training of Grade 1 student inspectors (May 2017)
- Grantee budget workshop (May 2017)
- Technical training for CSO pedagogical staff (June 2017)
- Training of Grade 2 student inspectors (July 2017)
- Training of trainers for Grade 2 (September 2017)
- Training of teachers for Grade 2 (October 2017)
- Training of master trainers in four poles (October-November 2017)
- CSO sustainability and technical reinforcement workshop (December 2017)

A2. Participatory Design, Development, and Revision of Lesson Plans

Over the life of project, RFS – SSE gathered a team of 19 Moroccan pedagogical inspectors and trainers, guided by a combination of national and international experts, to develop the new phonemic-based approach to reading instruction and reading lessons. Lesson development workshops were structured in three steps: (1) lesson plan conception, (2) lesson plan development, and (3) lesson plan harmonization and validation. During these workshops, the pedagogical structure of reading instruction for each grade level was designed (or revised) and finalized.

In Year 2 of the project, based on various forms of feedback collected throughout the academic year, RFS – SSE put together a set of recommendations for revising the lesson plans, teacher guidebooks, and student exercise books. RFS – SSE then presented these recommendations to a small production committee comprising international and local experts and regional coordinators and inspectors through a series of workshops.

Notably, the finalized reading materials produced for the 2017-2018 academic year had gone through three iterations for Grade 1 and two iterations for Grade 2 in less than two years. All improvements to the reading materials responded in thoughtful and rigorous ways to feedback from the field as well as international best practices. The consistent commitment to revising and improving reading materials testifies to all parties' dedication to producing the best possible reading materials for the 2017-2018 academic school year. The following activities facilitated this work:

2015-2016 Academic Year:

- Lesson plan development workshop for Grade 1 (December 2015)
- Grade 1 lesson plan development by the regional committees (January 2016)
- Lesson plan harmonisation and validation workshop for Grade 1 (January 2016)

2016-2017 Academic Year:

- Lesson plan development workshop for Grades 1 and 2 (May 2016)
- Stories and text development workshop for Grades 1 and 2 (June 2016)
- Grades 1 and 2 lesson plan development by the regional committees (June 2016)
- Lesson plan harmonization and validation workshop for Grades 1 and 2 (July 2016)

2017-2018 Academic Year:

- Part I of Grade 1 reading material revision workshop (June 2017)

- Part 2 of Grade 1 reading material revision workshop (July 2017)
- Grade 2 reading material revision workshop (July 2017)

A3. Material Re/Production and Distribution to Target Schools and AREFs

Once the lesson plans were developed, the critical next step was to combine the lesson plans into a guidebook for teachers that included both specific, practical instructions for teaching and background on the theory behind those practices. All printing was done locally and distributed to the 91 target schools across the eight provinces prior to the commencement of the school year or relevant semester.

In Years 1 and 2, RFS – SSE was responsible for printing and delivering all the materials to the pilot schools in the four targeted regions. However, in Year 3, as part of the nationalization of the Grade 1 materials, MNVET took on this responsibility. Every AREF in Morocco’s 12 regions was responsible for printing and distributing the materials to all public schools in its respective region. To facilitate the training of master trainers, RFS – SSE printed and distributed the trainers manual to all Grade 1 inspectors across Morocco. The materials which RFS – SSE developed, produced, and circulated to schools include the following:

2015-2016 Academic Year:

- Trainer guidebook for Grade 1 (January 2016)
- Teacher guidebook for Grade 1 (January 2016)
- Story booklets for Grade 1 (January 2016)
- Teacher guide on using the student book for Grade 1 (February 2016)

2016-2017 Academic Year:

- Trainer guidebook for Grades 1 and 2 (September 2016)
- Teacher guidebook for Grades 1 and 2 (September 2016)
- Student exercise books for Grades 1 and 2 (October and December 2016)
- Pedagogical toolkit for Grades 1 and 2 Teachers (November 2016)

2017-2018 Academic Year:

- Revised teacher guidebook for Grade 1 (August 2017)
- Revised student exercise books for Grade 1 (August 2017)
- Revised story booklet for Grade 1 (August 2017)
- Revised teacher guidebook for Grade 2 (September 2017)
- Revised student exercise books for Grade 2 (September 2017)
- Revised story booklet for Grade 2 (September 2017)
- Revised trainer guidebooks for Grades 1 and 2 (September 2017)

A4. Constructing the Feedback Loop Through Qualitative Monitoring

In addition to gathering quantitative data throughout the life of the project via EGRAs, the project has prioritized qualitative data that has provided valuable information for the feedback loop and revised reading materials and training content. This qualitative feedback has helped reshape and revise the final materials for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Qualitative monitoring included:

- Grade 1 teacher focus group (June 2016)

- Check-in meetings with four target AREFs (December 2016)
- Check-in meetings/orientations with schools directors in the eight provinces (December 2016)
- Regional teacher forums/Atelier de partage d'approfondissement et de renforcement (APARs) (January 2017)
- Classroom observation field visits (April 2017)
- Grades 1 and 2 teacher focus group (June 2017)

Exhibit I (see page 4) lists the number of beneficiaries RFS – SSE trained; the project’s additional beneficiaries — including 11,742 students; and the materials RFS – SSE produced to achieve Result 1.

B. RESULT 2

In its second year, RFS – SSE completed Result 2: “Summer reading enrichment activities tested for reducing learning loss among grade 2 children in target schools.”¹ To select interested, eligible grantees, RFS – SSE designed an RFA to solicit concept papers and budgets from CSOs that had memoranda of understanding with their provincial directorates. The RFA detailed the evaluation criteria and provided instructions on the assessment process.

After the release of the RFA for grants, informational workshops were organized for the CSOs in each of the four target regions during the first week of February 2017. The workshops introduced RFS – SSE to the CSOs, detailed the RFA and the application process, and provided opportunities to elaborate on expectations for a summer reading grants program; in addition, the sessions allowed CSOs to ask follow-up questions. In total, 68 CSOs from the four regions were invited to attend.

RFS – SSE formed an evaluation committee to assess the concept notes. In total, 29 applications were received in response to the RFA; however, only 28 applications were shared with the evaluation committee because one application was incomplete and eliminated from evaluation. The committee met for two half-days. Evaluators independently scored each applicant based on the criteria in the RFA and then discussed applicants during the selection meetings, averaging their scores for each applicant. The CSO with the best score in each of the eight target provinces was selected first, except in Figuig, because the only application received from a CSO from this province did not meet the minimum score to be considered eligible. Hence, at least one CSO from the other seven provinces was selected. The other three CSOs selected had the next best average scores (there was one CSO from Oujda, one from Inzegane, and one from Temara). The selected CSOs participated in a series of capacity building activities that facilitated administrative and technical implementation of their proposed programs. The series of capacity building activities included training on how to develop a reading enhancement program, build a corresponding budget and justify it, and manage a budget as well as a technical training on reading activities. The technical training equipped the grantees’ pedagogical staff with tools, ideas, and techniques on how to design activities that incorporate reading and take into consideration the phonemic approach as much as possible.

In the last quarter of Year 2, the CSOs’ work in preparing for the 2017 summer reading

¹ The students who participated in RFS – SSE’s summer reading grants program included students who had just completed Grades 1 and 2 in the pilot intervention schools.

grants program came to fruition. The 10 grantees implemented and successfully completed their summer reading programs between July and August 2017 (see Exhibit 3). The reading enrichment activities, which took place across seven provinces, engaged 597 students (280 girls and 317 boys).

Exhibit 3. 10 Participating Civil Society Organizations

PROVINCE	NAME OF GRANTEE	YEAR OF CREATION
OUJDA	<i>Association de Cooperation pour le Developpement et la Culture</i>	2014
OUJDA	<i>Union Nationale des Femmes des Maroc Oujda</i>	1969
INZEGANE	<i>Scoutisme Hassania Maroc</i>	1993
INJEGANE	<i>Association Moutaka des Jeunes pour le Developpement</i>	2008
TIZNIT	<i>Association Forum de Création et Communication</i>	2007
TAOUNATE	<i>Association Chraga pour le Developpement et la Communication</i>	2003
EL HAJEB	<i>Association Chantier Jeunesse Maroc – Section Alhajeb</i>	2015
TEMARA	<i>Association Marocaine pour l'Education de la Jeunesse – Section Temara</i>	1976
TEMARA	<i>Association Marocaine des Petits Débrouillards</i>	2005
KENITRA	<i>Association Sanad Elkhair</i>	2012

Each of the 10 summer reading grants programs took place in either July or August 2017, and each program ran for an average of two weeks. Each CSO was allowed the flexibility to be creative and innovative with the design and implementation of its program; however, all programs focused on engaging students in interactive student-centered reading games that would boost their reading skills and confidence. These extracurricular reading activities took place in schools, public places, and community settings, which also encouraged and increased awareness and family involvement. Parents and community leaders committed to supporting the activities and advocated for the necessary institutional support from local officials.

During the 10 programs' implementation, several site visits were completed, enabling rigorous follow-up and learning about grantees' exciting and interactive activities. Of the many highlights and positive outcomes of the summer reading grants program, the most palpable outcome was the realization of the necessity for such summer programs and the community engagement these programs sparked. In people ranging from parents and neighbors to local officials, community enthusiasm and engagement were evident and strong.

Exhibit 4 shows the main steps RFS – SSE followed, from the release of the RFA to the last CSO workshop for sustainability and technical reinforcement.

Exhibit 4. 11-Step Grants Process for CSOs



SECTION III

EARLY GRADE READING ASSESSMENT

A. STUDY DESIGN, TRAINING, AND DATA COLLECTION

Because RFS – SSE was an experimental project, an integral and crosscutting element of it was evaluation and assessment. The EGRA, which provided data on students' acquisition of basic reading skills and assessed the skills they needed to develop to read, was staggered over the course of the project to reinforce and supplement the project's qualitative evaluation data.

To assess student learning outcomes under RFS – SSE, Chemonics collaborated with STS — a U.S. subcontractor specializing in EGRA tool adaptation, administration, and enumerator training — and CNEE, a Moroccan counterpart. STS provided technical assistance to Chemonics in the areas of data collection and evaluation. Specifically, STS supported the development of a statistically significant sampling plan, adapted and finalized the EGRA and Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness (SSME) surveys (see boxes), and completed data analysis of EGRA and SSME survey results. The following EGRA training sessions were completed:

- Tool adaptation and pilot (December 2015)
- Baseline seven-day enumerator training (January 2016)
- Baseline data collection (January 2016)
- Midline 1 enumerator refresher training (May 2016)
- Grade 1 Midline 1 data collection (May 2016)
- EGRA enumerator refresher training (September 2017)
- Grades 1 and 2 Baseline/Midline 2 data collection (October 2016)
- EGRA enumerator refresher training (May 2017)
- Grades 1 and 2 EGRA Endline data collection (May/June 2017)
- Summer Baseline data collection (June 2017)
- EGRA enumerators refresher training (September 2017)
- Summer Endline data collection (September 2017)

SSME

- Six tools that provide context when correlated to EGRA performance
- Includes basic inputs, characteristics, and practices at home and in school

EGRA

- Six subtasks that measure literacy skills
- Administered in a one-to-one format outside class
- Lasts 20 minutes
- Developed in Modern Standard Arabic

A1. Tool Adaptation and Pilot

In December 2015, the project held an EGRA and SSME tool adaptation and pilot workshop. The first objective of the workshop was to develop two EGRA tools in Modern Standard Arabic for use during RFS – SSE's internal impact evaluation, which was conducted throughout the life of the project. The second objective of the workshop was to develop a

set of SSME tools adapted to the Moroccan context as well as the realities and interests of the RFS – SSE project. The SSME tools and the EGRA tools were administered during each stage of data collection to provide a rich view of the school environment surrounding students (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5. EGRA/SSME Tool Development



A total of 19 participants were selected and invited by the National Center for Evaluations and Exams to attend the adaptation workshop. Participants began by reviewing a pre-existing EGRA tool in Modern Standard Arabic that had previously been administered in Morocco and other Arabic-speaking countries, such as Egypt and Jordan. Participants became familiar with the assessment and how EGRA had been used in the past. Under the guidance of STS facilitators with expertise in EGRA adaptation, the participants then agreed on which subtasks to include in the new EGRA and created new content for all subtasks.

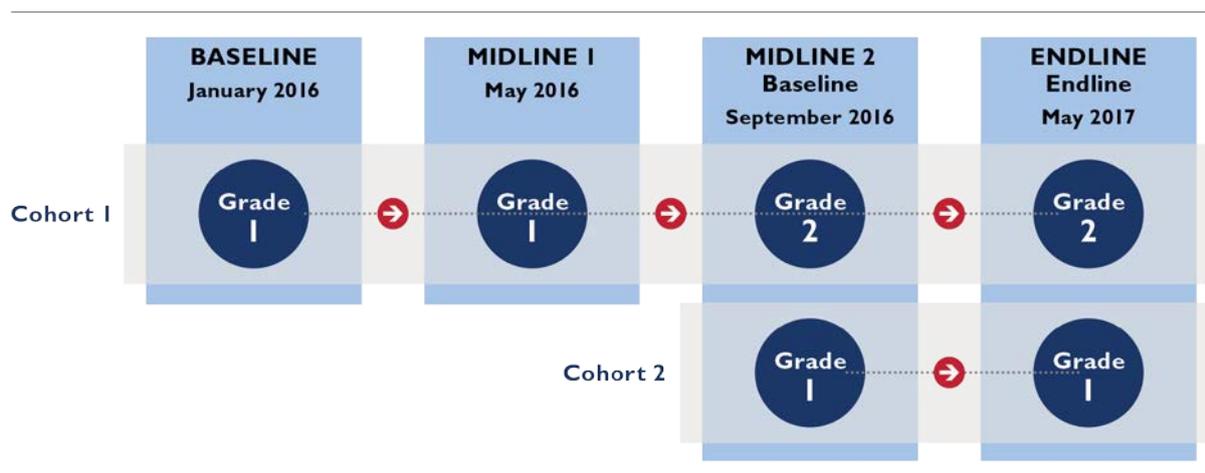
Similarly, SSME tools were updated to include items that were of interest to the participants and appropriate to the context of Morocco as well as the needs of the RFS- SSE project. At the end of the workshop, draft EGRA and SSME tools were completed and ready for piloting. During a two-day training following the adaptation workshop, the project taught eight provincial representatives how to administer the EGRA and SSME tools using the electronic data capture software Tangerine. The pilot was conducted with students in Grades 1 and 2 in each of the eight provinces involved in the RFS- SSE activity. A total of 16 students were targeted in each school — eight students in Grade 1 and eight students in Grade 2. In all, the tools were piloted with 276 students in Grades 1 and 2 in 16 schools.

A2. Baseline

To assess the impact of the RFS – SSE Arabic reading lessons, the project selected a longitudinal evaluation design. The evaluation was designed to test the same cohort of students at different intervals (see Exhibit 6 on next page). Cohort 1 was tested at four interval points over 18 months (the middle and end of Grade 1 and throughout Grade 2 — Baseline, Midline 1, Midline 2, and Endline). Cohort 2 was tested twice in a nine-month period equal to one academic year (i.e., at the beginning and end of Grade 1 — Midline 2 and Endline). Because the students were selected at random, it is possible to generalize the results of each cohort to all students in the treatment group in the eight provinces where the reading lessons were implemented.

A seven-day enumerator training from January 4 to 10, 2016, was organized in Rabat prior to data collection for the Baseline assessment. The training participants were selected by CNEE and were equally sourced from each of the eight provinces of the RFS – SSE activity. The enumerators were trained to administer all six EGRA subtasks on tablets using the electronic data-capture application Tangerine.

Exhibit 6. RFS – SSE Evaluation Design



In addition, RFS – SSE trained enumerators on the specific contents of each of the EGRA subtasks, proper administration protocols for each subtask, the use of tablets and the Tangerine application, and other related topics. Two lead facilitators regularly monitored enumerator performance throughout training. Facilitators also led two sessions to measure the consistency of all enumerators' scoring throughout the training. Depending on the subtask, enumerator consistency ranged from 96 percent to 99 percent agreement.

Baseline data collection occurred from January 15 through 22, 2016, and the enumerator team was able to reach approximately 98 percent of the target number of students. To ensure the quality of data collection, a trained supervisor oversaw each data collection team of two EGRA enumerators. At the end of each day, supervisors and enumerators discussed progress and problems encountered that day. The supervisors verified that each enumerator had completed the correct number of assessments at each school and ensured that a daily data collection report was completed. Each team visited one school per day and was able to reach all schools it planned to reach. The teams uploaded the results to a cloud database each evening after data collection. Those data were reviewed and tallied nightly by the STS EGRA coordinator and discussed with the supervisors. In all, 1,729 students participated in the Baseline data collection — 871 in the control group and 858 in the experimental group.

A3. MIDLINE 1

Prior to Midline 1 data collection, the project conducted a three-day refresher training for enumerators from May 9 through 11, 2016, in Rabat. All Midline 1 enumerators had also served as enumerators during the Baseline and successfully completed the seven-day enumerator training in January 2016. During the refresher training, enumerators were retrained to administer all six EGRA subtasks on tablets using the electronic data-capture application Tangerine. Those who acted as supervisors during Baseline data collection were also retrained to administer all six SSME tools using Tangerine and to supervise data collection teams.

Enumerators were retrained on the specific contents of each EGRA subtask, proper administration protocols for each subtask, the use of tablets and the Tangerine application, and other related topics. The two lead facilitators also regularly monitored enumerator performance throughout training and led two sessions to measure the consistency of all

enumerators' scoring. During this second training for enumerators, depending on the subtask, consistency ranged from 96 percent to 100 percent agreement.

Eight new provincial representatives were also trained as provincial field coordinators during the refresher training; an additional half-day training was conducted exclusively for them.

Midline 1 data collection occurred from May 16 through 27, 2016, and the enumerator teams were able to reach approximately 97 percent of targeted students in the 90 intervention schools. The quality control measures taken during Baseline data collection were maintained during Midline 1 data collection. At the time of Midline 1 data collection, although the same schools and students included in the Baseline assessment were included in the Midline 1 assessment, a small number of students who participated in the Baseline study were unavailable to participate in the Midline 1 study. This attrition reduced the final Midline 1 sample to 1,677 students, or 97 percent of the Baseline sample.

A4. MIDLINE 2

Prior to Midline 2 data collection, the project conducted a second three-day refresher training for enumerators from September 19 through 21, 2016, in Rabat. All Midline 2 enumerators had also served as enumerators during the Baseline and Midline 1 studies and successfully completed the enumerator training in January and May 2016. During the refresher training in September 2016, the enumerators were retrained to administer all six EGRA subtasks. Those who acted as supervisors during Baseline and Midline 1 data collection were also retrained to administer all six SSME tools and to supervise data collection teams. Enumerators were retrained on the specific contents of each of the EGRA subtasks, proper administration protocols for each subtask, and the use of the Tangerine application. Enumerator consistency during Midline 2 training ranged from 93 percent to 100 percent agreement, depending on the subtask.

Midline 2 data collection occurred from September 23 to October 12, 2016. The same quality control measures taken during Baseline and Midline 1 data collection were maintained during Midline 2 data collection. The same schools and students included in the Baseline and Midline 1 assessments were also included in the Midline 2 assessment, but some students who participated in the Baseline and Midline 1 data collection could not be reached at the time of Midline 2.² This attrition reduced the final Midline 2 sample to 1,610 students, or 93 percent of the Baseline sample of 1,729 students.

At Midline 2, data was also collected from a new cohort of students — Cohort 2 — who came from the same schools as the sample for Cohort 1. Cohort 2 students were beginning Grade 1 at the time of the Midline 2. Across the 91 schools, 1,672 Cohort 2 students participated in the Midline 2 — 846 in the control group and 826 in the experimental group.

A5. ENDLINE 2

Prior to Endline data collection, RFS – SSE conducted a third refresher training for enumerators from May 3 through May 5, 2017, in Rabat. The content in the May 2017 refresher training was the same content in the refresher training for Midline 1 and Midline 2. Enumerator consistency during Endline training ranged from 96 percent to 100 percent

2. If a student was evaluated during the Baseline assessment but was subsequently absent during the Midline 1 assessment, that student was still eligible to participate in the Midline 2 assessment.

agreement, depending on the subtask.

Endline data collection occurred from May 8 to 24, 2017. The same quality control measures taken during Baseline, Midline 1, and Midline 2 data collection were taken during Endline data collection.

The Endline data collection gathered data from the same Cohort 1 schools and students included in Baseline, Midline 1, and Midline 2, data collections. However, several students who had participated in Baseline, Midline 1, and Midline 2 could not be reached at the time of the Endline. This attrition reduced the final Cohort 1 Endline sample to 1,579 students, or 91 percent of the Baseline sample of 1,729 students.

At the time of Endline data collection, the same schools and Cohort 2 students that were assessed in September 2016 were assessed again. Only Cohort 2 students who had been assessed in September 2016 were tested again at the time of the Cohort 2 Endline data collection in May 2017. However, some students who participated in the original data collection could not be reached at the time of the Endline data collection. This attrition reduced the final Cohort 2 Endline sample to 1,577 students, or 94 percent of the original sample of 1,672 Cohort 2 students.

A6. Summer Study

To reduce learning loss during the summer months, RFS – SSE awarded grants to 10 CSOs to implement summer reading enrichment activities during the summer of 2017. To evaluate this summer program’s impact on students’ learning loss, RFS – SSE conducted a longitudinal study with a pretest-post-test design that included an experimental group and a control group of students. The experimental group included students who participated in the summer reading programs organized by RFS – SSE. The control group included students who did not participate in the summer reading programs. For this summer study, RFS – SSE assessed students at the end of the 2016-2017 academic year in May or June 2017 and then again at the start of the new academic year in September 2017. The sample included 22 schools — 10 control schools and 12 experimental schools.

An additional and final refresher enumerator training took place in May 2017 followed by pre- and post-test data collections. (“Test” refers to the intervention — i.e., the summer reading enrichment activities. “Pre-test data collection” refers to the assessment of student learning prior to the summer reading program interventions. “Post-test data collection” refers to the assessment of students’ learning after they participated in the summer reading programs.) The content of the refresher training was similar to the content of the refresher training for Midline 1, Midline 2, and Endline. Because enumerator consistency was so high during training for the Baseline, Midline 1, Midline 2, and Endline data collections, RFS – SSE did not assess enumerator consistency during the summer study. The summer pretest data collection was completed between May 8 and 24, 2017, and between June 11 and June 14, 2017. The summer post-test data collection was completed between September 18 and 26, 2017. At pretest, 852 students were assessed; at post-test, 676 students — 79 percent of students assessed during pre-test data collection — were assessed again.

B. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION (RESULT 1)

The table below (see Exhibit 7 on next page) summarizes Cohort 1 EGRA results from the Endline. Specifically, the table shows the average scores as well as average gain scores of the

experimental and control groups for each of the six subtasks included in the EGRA from Midline 2 to Endline for Cohort 1.

Of the six subtasks assessed between Midline 2³ and Endline, two showed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups: For the subtasks Phonemic Awareness and Syllable Identification, the experimental group had significantly higher average scores than the control group. As is shown, for all six subtasks, the change in score from Midline 2 to Endline was statistically significant for both the experimental and control groups. In addition, for the Syllable Identification subtask, the experimental group’s gain was significantly larger than the control group’s gain.

Exhibit 7. Endline EGRA Results for Cohort 1

EGRA SUBTASK	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
	MIDLINE 2	ENDLINE	MIDLINE 2	ENDLINE	CHANGE SINCE MIDLINE 2	
PHONEMIC AWARENESS	5.53	7.25	4.60	6.27	1.73*	1.67*
SYLLABLE IDENTIFICATION**	28.75	55.23	28.51	52.50	26.48*	23.99*
NONWORD READING	7.97	17.48	7.84	17.00	9.50*	9.18*
PASSAGE READING	7.16	26.31	7.40	25.69	19.15*	18.31*
READING COMPREHENSION	0.63	1.09	0.68	1.09	0.46*	0.41*
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	1.90	2.66	1.89	2.56	0.76*	0.67*

**Indicates that there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in average score from Midline 2 to Endline within each group (i.e., within the experimental group, the difference from Midline 2 to Endline was statistically significant; or within the control group, the difference from Midline 2 to Endline was statistically significant).*
***Indicates that there was a statistically significant difference in the gain scores between the two groups from Midline 2 to Endline at $p < 0.05$.*
Note: Experimental Group $n = 769$; Control Group $n = 787$.

The table below (see Exhibit 8 on next page) summarizes Cohort 2 EGRA results from the Endline. Specifically, the table below shows the average scores as well as average gain scores of the experimental and control groups for each of the six subtasks included in the EGRA from Baseline⁴ to Endline for Cohort 2.

Of the six subtasks assessed at Endline, four showed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group average scores at Endline. For the subtasks Phonemic Awareness, Syllable Identification, Passage Reading, and Reading Comprehension, the experimental group had significantly higher average scores than the control group at Endline. As is shown, for all six subtasks, the change in score from Baseline to Endline was statistically significant both for the experimental and control groups. In addition, for all six subtasks, the change in scores for the experimental group was significantly greater than the

3. Midline 2 is being utilized as a more accurate Baseline of student learning for Cohort 1, as this demonstrates the change in one academic year with the same reading materials.
 4. Note: Baseline for Cohort 2 was administered in September/October 2016, also called “Midline 2.”

change for the control group.

Exhibit 8. Endline EGRA Results for Cohort 2

EGRA SUBTASK	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
	BASELINE	ENDLINE	BASELINE	ENDLINE	CHANGE SINCE BASELINE	
PHONEMIC AWARENESS**	1.04	5.74	1.14	4.00	4.70*	2.86*
SYLLABLE IDENTIFICATION**	8.09	40.26	7.56	35.66	32.18*	28.15*
NONWORD READING**	1.82	12.00	1.67	11.02	10.17*	9.35*
PASSAGE READING**	1.06	13.90	0.90	12.13	12.84*	11.24*
READING COMPREHENSION**	0.05	0.33	0.05	0.26	0.28*	0.21*
LISTENING COMPREHENSION**	0.61	1.68	0.68	1.60	1.07*	0.91*

**Indicates that there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in average score from Baseline to Endline within each group (i.e., within the experimental group, the difference from Baseline to Endline was statistically significant; or within the control group, the difference from Baseline to Endline was statistically significant).*
***Indicates that there was a statistically significant difference in the gain scores between the two groups from Baseline to Endline at $p < 0.05$.*
 Note: Experimental Group $n = 778$; Control Group $n = 799$.

C. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION (RESULT 2)

As part of the RFS – SSE summer reading grants program, 10 CSOs were awarded grants to implement summer reading enrichment activities during the summer of 2017. The summer activities complemented the RFS – SSE reading activities during the regular school year and encouraged students in Grades 1 and 2 to continue developing their reading skills during summer vacation.

Findings show (see Exhibit 9) that the average scores of students in both the experimental and control groups changed from Baseline to Endline on four of the six subtasks: Syllable Identification, Nonword Reading, Passage Reading, and Reading Comprehension. The change in scores from Baseline to Endline for the subtasks Phonemic Awareness and Listening Comprehension were not statistically significant.

Exhibit 9. Endline EGRA Results for Summer Program

EGRA SUBTASK	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
	BASELINE	ENDLINE	BASELINE	ENDLINE	CHANGE SINCE BASELINE	
PHONEMIC AWARENESS	6.29	6.55	7.18	7.26	0.27	0.08
SYLLABLE IDENTIFICATION	51.50	44.14	54.66	47.57	-7.36*	-7.08*

EGRA SUBTASK	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
	BASELINE	ENDLINE	BASELINE	ENDLINE	CHANGE SINCE BASELINE	
NONWORD READING	16.09	12.77	17.32	13.63	-3.33*	-3.69*
PASSAGE READING	22.72	16.61	24.95	18.72	-6.12*	-6.23*
READING COMPREHENSION	0.86	1.60	0.91	1.74	0.73*	0.83*
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	2.30	2.33	2.29	2.38	0.04	0.09

An asterisk (*) indicates that the average score difference between Baseline and Endline is statistically significantly different at $p < 0.05$.
Note: Experimental Group $n = 339$; Control Group $n = 329$.

SECTION IV

SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALEUP

During the lifecycle of RFS – SSE, several accomplishments contributed to the scaleup as well as the sustainability of project outcomes. In the four themed sections below, we describe these accomplishments and how they contributed to sustainability and scaleup.

A. RFS – NPR SCALEUP AND NATIONALIZATION OF GRADE I

In May 2017, USAID awarded the third phase of the Reading for Success Program, RFS – NPR, to Creative Associates International. The award of the national program is a positive step toward continuing to support educational reform in Morocco and highlights the important work that RFS – SSE has successfully undertaken since September 2015. Another promising sign is that MNVET publicly announced the nationalization of the Grade I materials produced under RFS – SSE. Hence, immediately after the contract for RFS – NPR was awarded, the two projects conducted a series of coordination and knowledge-sharing meetings to ensure a smooth programmatic transition and ensure that the two projects collaboratively produced revised materials to be used during the 2017-2018 academic year.

In addition to facilitating workshops to revise the Grade I materials for scaleup, RFS – SSE — in close collaboration with RFS-NPR and in line with the national scaleup of the Grade I reading materials — trained the Grade I master trainers across Morocco. With MNEVT and USAID, RFS – SSE decided to divide the country into four poles (Rabat, Fes, Agadir, and Marrakech). Education inspectors selected from Morocco's 12 regions would participate in one of the four pole workshops. The master trainer training sessions were each four days long and took place from October 8 through November 2, 2017.

The scaleup and training initiative was envisioned as a cascade of training sessions, starting with Step 1: to train the eight regional coordinators to become facilitators in the phonemic-based approach. Step 2 was to train the master trainers via the workshops in the four poles. Step 3 was for these master trainers to train the other education inspectors in their regions, and Step 4 was for these inspectors to train the Grade I teachers in each of their respective provinces. Steps 1 and 2 represent the training and collaboration undertaken by RFS – SSE and RFS-NPR. Steps 3 and 4 were the responsibility of the regional AREFs and provincial branches of MNVET (Direction Provinciales).

The scaleup and training of master trainers was a successful example of both projects, USAID, and MNEVT collaborating closely and establishing a unitary vision. After the training sessions and the implementation of the approach in schools, RFS – SSE produced a detailed report with recommendations on how to improve the Grades 1 and 2 stories to be shared with RFS – NPR before the latter project finalized its revised curricula for the 2018-2019 academic year.

B. BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF MNEVT STAFF

From the beginning to the end of the life of the project, RFS – SSE closely and strategically collaborated with MNVET to ensure sustainable outcomes, ministerial ownership, and transfer of knowledge to MNVET staff. The changes made in the teaching of reading would not have been possible without the buy-in and active involvement of the Curricula Direction. In addition, the numerous EGRAs completed for Result 1 and Result 2 were

made possible thanks to the partnership, reliability, and excellent performance of the orientation advisors who were part of the National Center for Evaluations and Exams. Close collaboration and coordination with governmental entities have been essential to the successful implementation of RFS – SSE activities; they also ensured that staff gained knowledge and expertise they could use in the future.

Additionally, although MNEVT employees at all levels have been important to the implementation of RFS – SSE activities, eight education inspectors and trainers who were part of the Teacher Training Institute (CRMEF) and took on the roles of regional coordinators crucially contributed to the project's implementation. There were two regional coordinators per target region (one per province), and over the course of the project's two years, coordinators wore many hats. They have become the core of the production committee, assisted in MEL tool development workshops, coordinated observations in the field, and led the teacher training sessions. Most recently, these coordinators were trained to lead the master trainers for Grade 1 national scaleup. Collaboration and coordination with these pedagogical inspectors and CRMEF trainers has been a lynchpin of the project and one of its success stories.

C. CIVIL SOCIETY COLLABORATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

RFS – SSE achieved the sustainability of Result 2, the summer reading program, by building the CSOs' capacity to implement summer reading programs. CSOs have consequently been inspired to implement similar activities during the school year and for the upcoming summer. Through the partnership with RFS – SSE, the CSOs have strengthened their relationships with their provincial directorates; many of these CSOs are now collaborating with MNVET on similar programs.

Additionally, after several months of reflection following the completion of the summer reading grants programs, RFS – SSE wanted to continue working with the 10 CSOs to build their capacity to capitalize on their experience and reinforce their technical reading capacity. In December 2017, the project organized a three-day CSO Sustainability and Technical Reinforcement Workshop. The workshop aimed to create a peer-to-peer learning community — a space to share learning with the CSOs — as well as bring in outside expertise and RFS – SSE's in-house experience. With this objective in mind, 24 participants from the 10 CSOs took part in the workshop.

D. COLLABORATING WITH OTHER USAID EDUCATION PROJECTS

In addition to collaborating closely with RFS – NPR, RFS – SSE collaborated with the Improving Deaf Children Reading Through Technology project. RFS – SSE shared the stories and texts (for both Grades 1 and 2) that it produced with Improving Deaf Children Reading Through Technology so this latter project could add the stories to the interactive website it developed for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. USAID encouraged this collaboration because it enabled resource sharing among the different implementers and partners and, in turn, enhanced cost-effectiveness and helped promote sustainability.

All of the collaboration, resource sharing, capacity building, and strategic decisions discussed above attest to the sustainability RFS – SSE achieved and promoted. Similarly, RFS – SSE has ensured the steady transfer of knowledge to all those who participated in the many production workshops. RFS – SSE has also transferred competencies through training to facilitate the development and administration of the EGRA and other related activities.

SECTION V

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. LESSONS LEARNED

RFS – SSE was designed as a learning activity. It is, therefore, especially important that lessons learned during its implementation are relayed so they may be applied to the RFS-NPR project and other future development projects. These lessons are detailed below.

A1. Number and Selection of Participants for a Production Committee

One important lesson learned concerns the number of participants engaged in lesson development workshops and in the development of EGRA evaluation tools. To allow for better coordination and establish a more coherent vision, it is imperative to reduce the number of participants involved in the actual writing of curricula. RFS – SSE has been working with a cohort of 19 curricula developers. Our experience indicates that this is a high number of participants to manage, particularly when the developers are working remotely. A production committee of 10 participants would have been more manageable; a smaller technical group would permit better coordination and a more unified vision. Additionally, curricula developers should be hired or engaged as full-time staff for the project and not just periodically invited to workshops; the continuous availability of such developers is essential. It is difficult to develop national educational reform during sporadic workshops. Additionally, having ministerial staff continuously available can greatly contribute to efficient knowledge transfer and sustainable capacity building. Comparable curriculum development projects have reported that similar production work requires a range of expertise and longer production time with several opportunities for materials to be validated by relevant committees.

Moreover, when selecting the participants for the production committee, it is best to have a combination of inspectors, trainers, and teachers and to ensure equal representation of men and women. If women are not well represented at the production phase, it will be more difficult to produce materials that are inclusive of both men and women. It is equally important to ensure that participants represent a range of age groups to achieve a balance of viewpoints and project sustainability. Many of the RFS – SSE production committee members, trainers, and teachers are near retirement age or had to retire during the course of the project.

A2. Selection of Participants for Tool Development

A group of pedagogical inspectors developed the EGRA and SSME tools in December 2015. However, the participants who became the EGRA enumerators and administered the test to students are orientation inspectors. It is advisable to have a combination of orientation and pedagogical inspectors work together during tool development workshops to ensure all parties' ownership of the tools and the synchronization of various skillsets. Additionally, the reading approach should be finalized before EGRA tools are developed to ensure that the test uses the same terminology and concepts being introduced in the new approach.

A3. Decentralized Communication

Centralized communication with MNVET is not the most efficient or effective method of coordination. Decentralized communication via regional focal points in the AREFs is necessary to ensure coordination at the regional and provincial levels, like official correspondence inviting participants to different workshops or the organization of actual workshops. Thus, it is advisable to have full-time focal points within the regional administration at the provincial and regional levels. More organic and direct channels of communication with project beneficiaries are also imperative. Minimizing the use of intermediaries while respecting MNEVT communication protocols is encouraged.

A4. Expansion and Scaleup

RFS – SSE learned to keep in mind that RFS – SSE was conceived as an experimental activity that would be scaled up across the country by MNVET. It was important to ensure that decisions made during the experimental phase would have no repercussions for MNVET. For example, hiring a publishing house to create stories to be used in the classroom would have not been a problem during the experimentation phase but could cause problems if the approach were adopted nationwide. By holding a story and text development workshop as part of a collaborative effort with MNEVT instead, RFS – SSE could mitigate these concerns.

Selecting teachers from the target provinces also ensured that the stories and texts developed represented cultural and regional diversity throughout the regions in a balanced way. During the scaleup, however, MNVET and its partners might consider still another approach to obtaining new stories that are age appropriate and socially inclusive; although the story and text development workshop was an innovative solution for RFS – SSE as an experimental project, the workshop did not produce stories and texts at the quality level desired or required for a nationwide program.

A5. Pedagogical Toolkit

An important lesson RFS – SSE learned concerns the pedagogical toolkits produced during the 2016-2017 academic year for Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers. Greater attention and resources were devoted to the Grade 1 toolkit than to Grade 2. Some of the tools produced for Grade 1, like the word flashcards, should have also been included in the Grade 2 toolkits. The toolkits MNEVT requested were not part of RFS – SSE's original scope of work. It was, therefore, a challenge to produce them within the timeline established. The lack of local technical experience with producing pedagogical toolkits also proved to be a challenge for RFS – SSE. Pedagogical toolkits provide valuable support to teachers as they implement new reading lessons, and teachers very much appreciated these toolkits. The toolkits should have been produced and distributed not just with the aim of using them during the pilot phase but also with the aim of making them affordable to allow for the expansion of their use.

A6. Workshop Facilitator

Throughout the life of project, RFS – SSE training sessions and workshops would have benefitted greatly if they had been led by an experienced facilitator. This individual could ensure that training sessions and workshops adhered to their established timelines. Additionally, the facilitator could moderate debate and discussions that went off track. In some training sessions and production workshops, debates often became unnecessary and time consuming. Time was mismanaged given the lack of this type of facilitation expertise.

The lesson learned is that to respect everyone’s time and adhere to the timeline for production, printing, and delivery, having an experienced facilitator oversee these workshops is essential. This position could be internal or external to the implementing team.

A7. Resistance to Change

Throughout this past year, every workshop, event, or activity was an opportunity to discuss how early grade reading materials could be innovative and country-specific while adopting appropriate regional and international practices. However, as is generally accepted, it is most difficult and time-consuming to measure shifts in mentality. Participants often have firmly embedded cultural beliefs, and it is often difficult to deconstruct the outdated narratives such participants may hold as axiomatic. At the beginning of the project, participants demonstrated a profound resistance to change, and each time new participants joined the project, they also demonstrated such resistance to change. RFS – SSE found that the best way to counter this resistance was to allow enough time for the participants/inspectors to see the changes these innovative early grade learning materials produced in the field/classroom. For example, there was a strong resistance to having short, playful texts and stories. Initially, inspectors believed that if the texts were not difficult and loaded with moral values, they could have no place in classrooms. However, once inspectors saw how teachers and students reacted to the playful, age-appropriate, and fun texts, the inspectors changed their minds.

A8. MNEVT Staff Stipends

In its last two years, RFS – SSE administered stipends to MNEVT staff each time they participated in a workshop or a training. Although MNEVT required the administration of these stipends, the practice has created unsustainable expectations. Future projects should attempt to discontinue this practice.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

B1. Result 1

B1a. Equal Representation of Men and Women

It is important to ensure that all aspects of reading projects represent men and women equally. The representation of women across the EGRA and lesson development workshops and in the material production committee was lacking. Out of the lesson development committee’s 17 participants, only two were women. Out of the 65 EGRA enumerators, only six were women. Women’s lack of representation on such committees is mostly due to sociocultural challenges that exceed the project’s control. However, RFS – SSE recommends that future projects continue to work with MNEVT and USAID to take more steps toward achieving gender equality and social inclusion in every activity.

B1b. Geographic Coverage

MNEVT made the decisions concerning the selection of the targeted provinces and regions that would participate in the intervention. The selection was designed to ensure geographic representation of the whole country (i.e., its urban and rural areas). Within selected provinces, an electronic random selection process determined which schools would participate in the pilot project. However, this random selection resulted in the participating schools within each province being far from one another. The distance between schools limited the interventions the project could and would have undertaken had the schools been

clustered together. For example, if the schools had been closer together, RFS – SSE could have more easily provided additional training or coaching to form communities of practice. RFS – SSE recommends that MNEVT and future projects take this into consideration for future work to facilitate knowledge sharing and a more efficient use of resources.

B1c. Training Length and Scheduling

Training sessions and production workshops might have benefited if they had been longer. It is best practice for trainers of teachers and training for teachers to devote at least 15 days for training. However, because training sessions had to be held during the school year, MNEVT only approved three to four days of training at a time. A three-day one-time training is insufficient for teachers to master and adopt a new approach. Hence, the project had to find alternative ways to give teachers all the support they needed, like the supplemental teacher training sessions and the classroom demonstration in May 2016, both of which succeeded and demonstrated the benefits teachers could derive from additional training support. However, the challenges associated with scheduling were amplified during the workshops that took place during Ramadan. The series of holidays that followed and examination season also prevented training sessions from being longer.

B1d. Lack of Coaching

A technical challenge for RFS – SSE was the coaching program; the project was never able to implement this support system during the life of the project. RFS – SSE was envisioned as working with the coaches MNEVT selected for its own coaching program. However, before the end of the project, not enough coaches had been selected or identified for this government program to cover RFS – SSE's target schools. Future projects will need either to work more closely with MNEVT to select a sufficient number of coaches or to find an alternative type of coach to provide this supplemental support.

B2. Result 2

B2a. Length of Summer Program

In RFS – SSE's experience, for summer programs to significantly reduce reading loss during the summer months, those programs must be at least four weeks. Grant awards should include sufficient funding to allow for an increase in the length of summer programming.

B2b. CSO Technical Training Content

RFS – SSE found that to be able to work with a variety of CSOs (e.g., small, large, new, and established ones), it was necessary to sufficiently train CSOs on program design and technical pedagogy. It is best to provide several different types of training and at several points in time before the implementation of the summer programs. The CSOs should be equipped with the necessary tools to effectively design summer reading programs.

Additionally, it is important that the individuals from CSOs who participate in training on technical pedagogy are the same individuals who implement the summer reading programs. Individuals who are insufficiently trained will not be fully equipped with the requisite skills to implement and facilitate successful summer reading programs. Training topics could include educational programming; methods, strategies, and tools to maintain and improve reading skills in early grades; and criteria for the selection or development of reading material (including content and design).

B2c. Complementary Capacity Building Training for CSOs

In addition to technical training on reading pedagogy for CSOs, a communication and MEL capacity building training of at least two days in length should be organized before summer reading programs are implemented. Such training will equip CSOs with the skills necessary to monitor the programs' effectiveness and implementation fidelity.

B2d. Evaluation Tool

RFS – SSE recommends developing an evaluation tool that can measure both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of summer programs to best assess their impact. RFS – SSE was required to assess the summer programs using an EGRA tool. The hope was that RFS – SSE could measure the retention of what was taught to students during the academic year under Component I. However, because the EGRA measures reading skill and not curriculum content, this tool might not have been the most appropriate to measure the summer programs' impact, especially given the short timeline of those programs. It would also be best to develop pre- and post-questionnaires that measure reading skills and that can be administered at the very beginning and end of summer programs; such questionnaires would mean measurements could be more timely and specific.

B2e. Promote Reading Clubs All Year

The qualitative feedback gathered throughout the summer suggest there is solid interest and positive engagement in summer reading programs like the one RFS – SSE implemented. Therefore, RFS – SSE recommends that schools promote and organize extracurricular reading programs during the school year in addition to summer reading programs to ensure continuity in students' reading skills development during the summer. This could be done through reading clubs or intermittent but regular initiatives, like reading classes or class competitions with incentives for students to read.

B2f. Learning from the Community for Optimal Program Design

Focus groups generate good qualitative data that may, in turn, facilitate community engagement and recommendations. RFS – SSE suggests organizing focus groups when summer reading programs are in the design stage and end stage so recommendations from community members — especially parents and teachers — can best inform the development of summer reading programs.

B2g. Promote the Summer Reading Programs

RFS – SSE also recommends promoting summer reading programs through social media and local media to highlight the efforts and leadership of local organizations that will continue to raise awareness about the importance of reading and engagement. Additionally, RFS – SSE suggests advertising summer reading programs during the spring to ensure that people are aware of those programs and to help boost student enrollment and attendance.

SNAPSHOTS

SNAPSHOT I

A SUMMER READING PROGRAM BRINGS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



Malak and her mother, Naima, at the closing ceremony in Temara, August 2017.

PHOTO: *Chemonics International*

“The summer reading program made it possible for my daughter to improve her reading and writing abilities and gain confidence in herself.”

— Naima

In 2016, 7-year-old Malak could barely write her own name in Arabic. At her elementary school in the small coastal town of Temara, Malak had already had to repeat Grade 1 before she could move on to Grade 2. According to her mother, Naima, Malak struggles with a learning disability. Teachers would often put her in the back of the room so they could focus on the students who were able to follow along with the lessons.

In August 2017, Malak took part in the USAID RFS – SSE summer reading program in her hometown. Malak was one of 520 young readers who participated in the program, which was implemented in partnership with 10 different associations across Morocco.

As part of the summer reading program, students like Malak engaged in interactive games that boosted their reading skills and their confidence. The activities took place in schools, parks, and community centers, raising awareness of the importance of early grade reading and encouraging students’ families and the greater community to get involved in championing it.

“My daughter’s reading and writing problems prevented her from reading and liking to read. They even prevented her from going to school. I would watch her give up ... until the summer reading program made it possible for my daughter to not only improve her reading and writing abilities but to gain confidence in herself. By giving hope to my daughter, this program gave me hope and strength.”

The program aimed to reduce summer learning loss by inviting early grade learners to continue practicing their reading skills during the summer months. Through interactive activities and games, the program promoted phonics-based reading instruction.

From 2015 to 2018, the RFS – SSE was implemented in four regions and eight delegations across Morocco. The program is being expanded to reach all Moroccan Grade 1 students through RFS – NPR, implemented with MNEVT.

SNAPSHOT 2

HAPPY STUDENTS MAKE HAPPY TEACHERS

Since February 2016, the USAID RFS – SSE reading activity has trained 181 Grade I teachers on implementing the new phonics-based reading method with 5,737 Grade I students across four regions in Morocco.



Badia and Zahiya, two Grade I teachers in Oujda, Morocco.

PHOTO: *Chemonics International*

Badia and Zahiya are Grade I school teachers in Oujda, a city in the northeastern corner of Morocco. Since February 2016, they have been implementing RFS, an experimental reading project, in their classrooms. Based on a new phonics-based approach to instruction, this experimental project aims to help beginning readers understand how letters correspond to sounds and identify common spelling patterns.

Although the project is still in the early stages, Badia and Zahiya already feel that adopting this phonics-based reading method is benefitting their students and themselves. At a recent focus-group meeting for teachers, Badia shared, “This phonics-based approach has brought back the child in me! ... I have been a first-grade teacher for 20 years and forgot how much I loved my job, but this reading method revived this feeling in me.”

Badia also observed that the approach has increased her students’ excitement about reading: “Despite the many existing challenges to improve primary education in Morocco, seeing my students’ enthusiasm, joy, and passion for the stories these past four months gave me a sense of hope and made me realize that, despite all challenges, if there is a will, there is a way ... We as teachers have the responsibility to never give up this will!”

RFS – SSE has witnessed the change in the attitudes of both students and teachers in the classroom, into which the new phonemic-based approach to Arabic reading has breathed new life, enabling students and teachers alike to experience learning in meaningful new ways.

SNAPSHOT 3

LEARNING IS BEST WHILE HAVING FUN

Since February 2016, nearly 12,000 Grade I and Grade II students have been learning how to read with the phonemic-based approach and the help of dedicated teachers.



Hachimi in his classroom, instilling the joy of learning in students.

PHOTO: *Chemonics Internatinoal*

“What we learn with pleasure, we never forget.” That is Hachimi’s teaching motto. For the past 13 years, Hachimi has been teaching Grade I at a public school in a small town in the northeastern corner of Morocco.

According to him, new teaching methods that are part of USAID’s experimental reading program RFS – SSE have amplified his love for teaching. By using a phonemic or syllabic method, Hachimi is helping his students understand how letters correspond to sounds and identify common spelling patterns.

For Hachimi, having fun is also an important ingredient in his classroom. The new reading lessons paired with imaginative stories, spelling games, and vibrant images are helping his students expand their vocabulary and boost their imagination. “Having a decorated, colorful class,” he says, “with sight words and images all around is activating the students’ love for reading.” This phonemic-based approach is revolutionary in Morocco; the former approach to reading instruction relied on long, didactic, difficult texts to teach students to read.

In classes like Hachimi’s, located in 91 participating schools across the country, the program’s approach is revolutionizing how students are learning to read. Since February 2016, nearly 12,000 Grade I and Grade 2 students have improved their reading skills through the program and the efforts of dedicated teachers.

ANNEX A. EVALUATING AND ASSESSING EARLY GRADE READING

EGRA measures the most basic skills students have that are required for fluency in reading and the skills needed to acquire greater reading comprehension (see box). Although many students are not yet fluent readers in the early grades, the EGRA allows us to capture what students, even “nonreaders,” can do and where they are on the developmental path to becoming fluent readers.

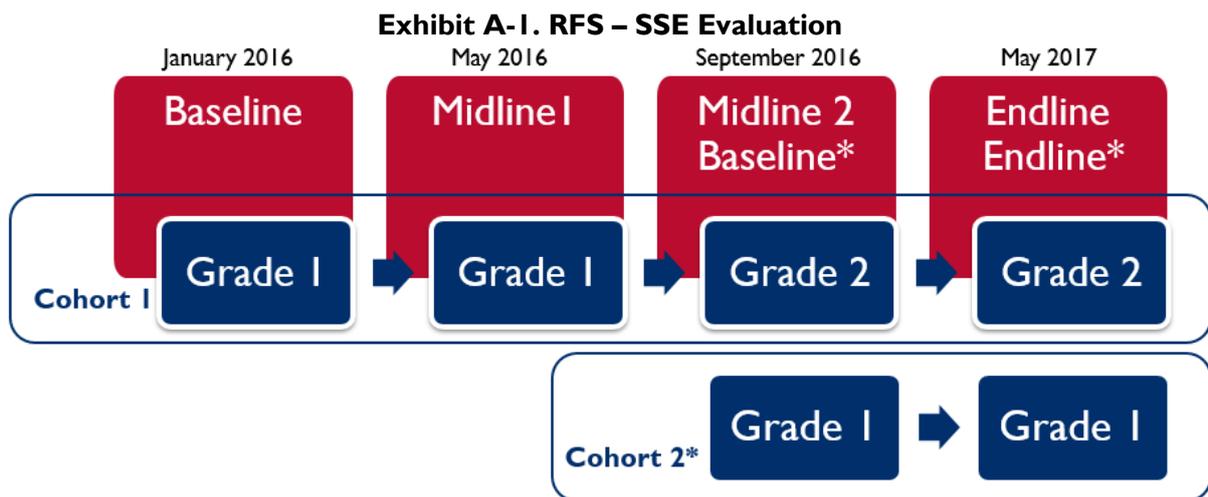
EGRA

- Six subtasks that measure literacy skills
- Administered in a one-to-one format outside class
- Lasts 20 minutes
- Developed in Modern Standard Arabic

RFS-SSE’s assessment was developed to measure six core reading competencies of students in Grade 1 and Grade 2. Some subtasks were timed to measure the speed or fluency with which students could identify graphemes (syllable identification), decode nonwords (phonics), and read connected text (fluency).

STUDY DESIGN BY EVALUATION CYCLE

The evaluation of RFS – SSE, as depicted below (see Exhibit A-1), was designed as a longitudinal study that would test the same cohort of students at different intervals. Cohort 1 has been tested at four interval points over 18 months. Cohort 2 was tested twice in a nine-month period (one academic year).



EGRA RESULTS BY SUBTASKS AND GROUPS: COHORT 1

The table below (see Exhibit A-2 on next page) summarizes Cohort 1’s Endline EGRA results. Specifically, the table summarizes the mean scores of the experimental and control groups for each of the six subtasks included in the EGRA.

Of the six subtasks assessed between Midline 2 and Endline, two showed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups: For the subtasks Phonemic Awareness and Syllable Identification, the experimental group had significantly higher average scores than the control group.

Exhibit A-2. Endline EGRA Results for Cohort 1

EGRA SUBTASK	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
	MIDLINE 2	ENDLINE	MIDLINE 2	ENDLINE	CHANGE SINCE MIDLINE 2	
PHONEMIC AWARENESS	5.53	7.25	4.60	6.27	1.73	1.67
SYLLABLE IDENTIFICATION	28.75	55.23	28.51	52.50	26.48	23.99
NONWORD READING	7.97	17.48	7.84	17.00	9.50	9.18
PASSAGE READING	7.16	26.31	7.40	25.69	19.15	18.31
READING COMPREHENSION	0.63	1.09	0.68	1.09	0.46	0.41
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	1.90	2.66	1.89	2.56	0.76	0.67

EGRA RESULTS BY SUBTASKS AND GROUPS: COHORT 2

The table below (see Exhibit A-3) summarizes the Cohort 2 EGRA results from Endline. Specifically, the table summarizes the mean scores of the experimental and control groups for each of the six subtasks included in the EGRA.

Of the six subtasks assessed at Endline, four showed a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group average scores at Endline. For the subtasks Phonemic Awareness, Syllable Identification, Passage Reading, and Reading Comprehension, the experimental group had significantly higher average scores than the control group at Endline.

Exhibit A-3. Endline EGRA Results for Cohort 2

EGRA SUBTASK	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
	BASELINE	ENDLINE	BASELINE	ENDLINE	CHANGE SINCE BASELINE	
PHONEMIC AWARENESS	1.04	5.74	1.14	4.00	4.70	2.86
SYLLABLE IDENTIFICATION	8.09	40.26	7.56	35.66	32.18	28.15
NONWORD READING	1.82	12.00	1.67	11.02	10.17	9.35
PASSAGE READING	1.06	13.90	0.90	12.13	12.84	11.24
READING COMPREHENSION	0.05	0.33	0.05	0.26	0.28	0.21
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	0.61	1.68	0.68	1.60	1.07	0.91

EGRA SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

As part of the RFS – SSE summer program, 10 CSOs were awarded grants to implement summer reading enrichment activities during the summer of 2017. The summer activities complemented the RFS – SSE reading activities taught during the regular school year and encouraged students in Grades 1 and 2 to continue developing their reading skills during summer vacation.

Findings show (see Exhibit A-4) that both the experimental and control groups had statistically significant differences in average student scores from Baseline to Endline on four of the six subtasks: Syllable Identification, Nonword Reading, Passage Reading, and Reading Comprehension. The findings confirm the hypotheses that there is a learning loss during the summer.

Exhibit A-4. Endline EGRA Results for Summer Program

EGRA SUBTASK	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	CONTROL GROUP
	BASELINE	ENDLINE	BASELINE	ENDLINE	CHANGE SINCE BASELINE	
PHONEMIC AWARENESS	6.29	6.55	7.18	7.26	0.27	0.08
SYLLABLE IDENTIFICATION	51.50	44.14	54.66	47.57	-7.36*	-7.08*
NONWORD READING	16.09	12.77	17.32	13.63	-3.33*	-3.69*
PASSAGE READING	22.72	16.61	24.95	18.72	-6.12*	-6.23*
READING COMPREHENSION	0.86	1.60	0.91	1.74	0.73*	0.83*
LISTENING COMPREHENSION	2.30	2.33	2.29	2.38	0.04	0.09

An asterisk (*) indicates that the average score difference between Baseline and Endline is statistically different at $p < 0.05$.

ANNEX B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN FRENCH

Au cours de la dernière décennie, le Maroc a accompli des progrès significatifs en fournissant un accès presque universel avec des taux nets de scolarisation en première année supérieurs à 97%. Cependant, les élèves marocains se classent systématiquement parmi les moins performants dans les évaluations internationales. En 2015, les études de recherche financées par l'USAID dans le domaine de la lecture au Maroc ont identifié le manque de formation des enseignants et l'absence de matériel de lecture supplémentaire comme étant les deux des principaux facteurs affectant la performance globale des élèves en matière de lecture. Reconnaissant que les acquis d'apprentissage, tout au long d'une vie, reposent sur une base solide de lecture précoce, le gouvernement marocain s'est engagé à améliorer les résultats en lecture au niveau du primaire.

Le projet expérimental USAID / Maroc Lire Pour Réussir (LPR) a été conçu pour répondre aux défis auxquels le système éducatif marocain est confronté, particulièrement, pour l'enseignement de la lecture Arabe et à l'absence documentée de données en terme de lecture. Suite à la première phase de recherche de LPR, USAID a lancé la deuxième phase « Lire Pour Réussir, Expérimentation à Petite Echelle » (LPR-EPE).

De Septembre 2015 à Mars 2018, Chemonics a travaillé en étroite collaboration avec le Ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation Professionnelle (MEFP) pour mettre en œuvre LPR-EPE. Ce programme expérimentale de lecture a été conçu pour développer et tester les approches les plus efficaces pour renforcer les compétences en lecture en langue Arabe pour les élèves de 1ère et 2ème année du primaire et cela dans des établissements scolaires ciblées

Le projet à mener les activités suivantes :

- Mettre à l'essai une nouvelle approche des cours de lecture en Arabe, basée sur la méthode syllabique/phonétique. Tester par le biais d'une évaluation EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment) les apprentissages des élèves de première et de deuxième années dans des écoles pilotes ciblées
- Élaborer de nouveaux supports de lecture en langue Arabe. Notamment, des guides de formation pour formateurs et pour les enseignants, cahiers d'exercices pour les élèves et de mallettes pédagogiques, au profit des enseignants, pour renforcer la pratique de la nouvelle approche dans les salles de classe.

Cette approche d'enseignement de la lecture a fait renaître l'enfant en moi! J'enseigne les élèves de première depuis 20 ans, j'ai oublié combien j'aime mon travail, cette méthode de lecture a ravivé ce sentiment en moi.

— BADIA, ENSEIGNANTE DE PREMIERE ANNEE, FORME PAR LPR-EPE

- Réduire les pertes d'apprentissage estivales en soutenant les organisations de la société civile en leur octroyant des subventions (small grant) pour développer et mettre en œuvre des activités d'enrichissement en lecture pour les élèves de 1ere et de 2eme année du primaire.

D'octobre 2016 à Mars 2018, LPR-EPE a collaboré avec le MEFP dans la conception, la formation, la mise en œuvre et l'évaluation des cours de lecture en langue Arabe pour les élèves de 1ere et de 2eme année du primaire. Le programme avait pour objectif de renforcer les compétences en lecture au niveau du primaire en améliorant les méthodes pédagogiques, la capacité des enseignants et des établissements scolaires et en introduisant les opportunités d'enrichissement estivale en lecture. Avec une structure qui mettait l'accent sur l'expérimentation et le suivi, le projet a utilisé de nouvelles méthodes d'enseignement, évalué leur impact et adapté ces méthodes de lecture pour améliorer la performance des élèves.

Durant deux ans et demi, LPR-EPE a collaboré avec le MEFP pour développer trois versions de matériel de lecture en langue Arabe révisé pour les élèves en première et deuxième années du primaire - un processus de pilotage, d'expérimentation et de révision continu. Le dispositif de lecture a été expérimenté dans 91 établissements scolaires et cela au sein de quatre régions et huit provinces du Maroc, notamment : Témara-Skhirat, Kénitra, El Hajeb, Taouanate, Figuig, Oujda Angad, Inezgane et Tiznit. Le projet a travaillé en étroite collaboration avec la Direction des curricula du MEFP, le Centre national d'évaluation et d'examens (CNEE), l'Unité centrale de formation des enseignants (CRMEF) et les bureaux régionaux du MEFP dans les régions sélectionnées - Académies Régionales pour l'Éducation et la Formation (AREF).

Avec l'étroite collaboration du MEFP et l'aide incontournable du personnel ministériel, LPR-EPE a développé des nouvelles leçons de lecture syllabique, le développement des guides pour les enseignants, les formateurs, mallette pédagogique pour les enseignants, livrets d'histoires et cahiers d'exercices pour les élèves. L'ensemble de ce dispositif a été produit dans des délais et des contraintes budgétaires particulièrement limitées, cependant chaque livrable a été soumis avec une grande qualité.

Comme l'illustre le graphique ci-dessous (voir la pièce 1, page 4), LPR-EPE a formé 41 formateurs et formatrices et 334 enseignants et enseignantes, repartis dans les huit provinces pilotes. Les enseignants formés par le projet ont utilisé l'approche d'enseignement de la lecture phonétique dans les écoles pilotes, atteignant 11 742 élèves au sein de 91 établissements scolaire. De plus, LPR-EPE a formé 259 nouveaux inspecteurs pédagogique. La formation permettra à tous les nouveaux inspecteurs pédagogique de maîtriser la nouvelle approche et par conséquent il sont dorénavant bien équipés pour soutenir et coacher les enseignants qui la mettent en œuvre.

LES PARTIS PRENANTES

Partenaires

- Direction des Curricula
- CNEE
- CRMEF
- AREF de Rabat-Kenitra, Fes-Meknes, Orient et Souss-Massa-Drâa

Sous-contractants

- Association Al Jisr
- ALCO Alternative Consultants
- School-to-School International (STS)

Régions

- Souss-Massa-Drâa
- Orient
- Fes-Meknes
- Rabat-Kenitra

LPR-EPE a utilisé EGRA comme outil d'évaluation pour établir une base de référence (étude initiale) pour l'apprentissage des élèves de première et deuxième année. L'évaluation a aussi permis de réévalué les progrès des élèves à travers deux évaluations à mi-parcours et une évaluation finale et cela sur toute la durée du projet. Le partenaire School-to-School International (STS) a dirigé l'ensemble des travaux liés à EGRA.

Les élèves qui ont utilisé le dispositif de lecture révisé en langue Arabe au sein des 46 établissements scolaires expérimentales parmi les 91 établissements scolaires participant au projet, ont été testés par le biais d'EGRA. Leurs apprentissages ont été comparé à ceux des élèves au sein des 45 écoles témoins qui n'ont pas participé à l'expérimentation. Les élèves qui ont été introduit à l'approche phonémique pour l'apprentissage de la lecture a eu lieu sur une période relativement brève, notamment, 18 mois pour la première cohorte d'élèves, et 9 mois pour la deuxième cohorte.

En règle générale et dans le cadre d'un projet similaire, les élèves utiliserai le nouveau dispositif d'apprentissage de la langue Arabe, durant plusieurs années avant de tester l'efficacité du dispositif. Cependant, même dans ce laps de temps limité, les résultats de l'étude finale EGRA ont démontré des améliorations statistiquement significatives pour les étudiants expérimentaux. Comme l'indique la section III « Évaluation de la lecture au primaire » un impact positif pour les élèves introduis aux nouvelles intervention a été noté. En effet, cette approche leur a permis de développer des compétences pour les sous taches « conscience phonémique » et « l'identification des syllabes ».

Le développement des aptitudes de la conscience phonémique chez les jeunes apprentis est un élément important pour la réussite ultérieure en matière de lecture courante. Semblable à la conscience phonémique, la capacité des jeunes élèves à identifier les syllabes est prédictive d'un succès futur en lecture. Il est nécessaire que les élèves apprennent à entendre les démarcations des syllabes d'une manière directe, explicite et attrayante. La connaissance syllabique sera, par conséquent, transféré à la lecture, l'orthographe et l'écriture et en retour ces compétences pourrons être utilisé au profit des autres matières enseigner et contribuer au succès académiques.

Afin d'illustrer de la réussite du projet, le MEFP a sollicité le soutien de LPR-EPE au niveau national pour l'intégration de l'approche au profit de tous les élèves de 1ère année du primaire dans les 12 régions du Royaume. Cela représente une extension du travail original compléter par LPR-EPE au Programme National de Lecture (PNL).

En lien avec la deuxième composante du projet, notamment, la collaboration avec les associations de la société civile pour mettre en œuvre des activités d'enrichissement en lecture durant l'été 2017. Cette deuxième composante, a été mis en œuvre en collaboration avec l'association partenaire Al Jisr. LPR-EPE a concédé 10 subventions aux associations locales pour développer et soutenir divers programmes de lecture estivale. L'équipe en charge de la gestion des subventions a travaillé avec les associations locales pour développer leurs programmes d'enrichissement en lecture par le biais d'ateliers pour les bénéficiaires sélectionnés avant et après la mise en œuvre du programme estivale. Ces ateliers visaient à renforcer la capacité des bénéficiaires à concevoir et à gérer des programmes de lecture, à vérifier les budgets et les délais, et à tirer des leçons en terme de réussites et des défis pour la réalisation de programme de lecture estivale semblables à l'avenir.

Les associations locales et les élèves bénéficiaires ont démontré leur enthousiasme et appréciation pour le programme tout en favorisant et promouvant l'implication des parents et autres membres de la communauté. Il est important de noter, que ce programme de lecture estivale est le premier du genre au Maroc, au total 520 étudiants y ont participé.

En conclusion, LRP-EPE a renforcé avec succès les pratiques pédagogiques efficaces pour l'enseignement de la lecture en langue Arabe au sein de 91 établissements scolaires au Maroc. Ce faisant, LRP-EPE a permis au MEFP de générer des données qui établiront les bases d'une réforme curriculaire dans un proche avenir grâce à des programmes tels que le successeur « Lire Pour Réussir Programme National de Lecture » - (LPR-PNL) ainsi que d'autres programmes de réforme éducative menés par le MEFP.

Ce rapport fournit de plus amples informations sur le contexte de la réforme de l'éducation au Maroc, les activités du projet au titre des résultats 1 et 2 ainsi que les réussites et les enseignements tirés du projet Lire pour Réussir – Expérimentation à Petite Echelle (LRP-EPE).

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