



This brief analyzes one of the four major themes in USAID education programming in Sub-Saharan Africa: community engagement, conflict- and crisis-response, gender-based violence, and systems strengthening. These themes were identified through the basic education PPR narratives submitted for fiscal year (FY) 2019. Eighteen Sub-Saharan African countries provided FY 2019 PPR narratives for basic education activities: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. In some cases, countries also reported on education activities under other PPR narratives, such as youth, gender-based violence (GBV), gender, or inclusive development. When possible, these programs are included here, which has resulted in the inclusion of Zambia and Zimbabwe. Programs that did not clearly describe a school-based component in the PPR narratives were excluded, so there may be some relevant programming not captured here. The most frequently mentioned themes across PPR narratives were community engagement, conflict- and crisis-response, and systems strengthening. GBV is elevated as a fourth theme because it is a major priority for USAID and because school-based GBV programs are frequently described in the GBV and gender PPR narratives, even when not included in the basic education narratives. Each thematic area is divided in two sections: 1) background on the theme and its importance, and 2) a snapshot of USAID’s work in these areas, including a list of programs, high-level observations about the nature of the work, and summaries of exemplar projects. Country PPR narratives provide more information on all programs described here.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION/ENGAGEMENT | Sub-Saharan Africa

Parent And Community Engagement In Education Programs

Community and parent engagement has been widely recognized as a necessary component of effective education programs around the world and specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to a report by UNESCO and the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, “a core driver of quality school improvement initiatives is the generation of meaningful connection between teachers, parents, students, and community members” (2017). Engaging communities in education programs has been shown to foster local ownership and embrace of education for children, increase the quality of education, enhance support between parents and teachers, maximize learning opportunities, leverage local resources, and strengthen community relations (Education Quality Improvement Program [EQUIP] I and USAID 2011). USAID recognizes the importance of community engagement in education, stating that “programs that take a comprehensive approach by engaging families, community members, and key stakeholders, including policymakers, through social and behavior change communication or family and community engagement, see more successful outcomes” (USAID 2018).

The U.S. Government (USG) Strategy on International Basic Education commits to engaging and empowering parents and caregivers, students and youth, and community leaders, among others, as a part of the effort towards local self-reliance (2018). In alignment with the USG Strategy, USAID has committed to supporting missions in setting bold targets to strengthen capacity in the engagement of parents and families. Specifically, USAID uses a standard indicator that measures the number of parent-teacher associations (PTAs) or community governance structures engaged in USG-supported primary or secondary education.

Current USAID Parent and Community Engagement in Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa

COUNTRY	USAID ACTIVITY WITH COMMUNITY/PARENT ENGAGEMENT
Democratic Republic of the Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACCELERE! 1 (A!1) Integrated Youth Development
Djibouti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Djibouti Early Grade Reading Activity (DEGRA)
Ethiopia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading for Ethiopia’s Achievement Developed II (READ II) READ Community Outreach (READ CO)
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Liberia Accelerated Quality Education (AQE)
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Reading Program (NRP) Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity (MERIT) Assess the Learners (YESA) Give Girls a Chance to Learn (AMAA)
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selective Integrated Reading Activity (SIRA) Education Recovery Support Activity (ERSA) Girls Leadership and Empowerment through Education (GLEE)
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vamos Ler! (“Let’s Read!”) (VL) Eu Leio (I Read) Nikhalamo (I’m Here to Stay)
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niger Education and Community Strengthening (NECS)
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mureke Dusome

COUNTRY	USAID ACTIVITY WITH COMMUNITY/PARENT ENGAGEMENT
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture Pour Tous (“Reading for All”) Our Children Read
Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative Basic Education (ABE)
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Story Powered Schools (SPS)
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tusome Pamoja (“Let’s Read Together”)
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA)

*Based on FY19 PPR Narrative Responses

USAID’s Approaches to Community and/or Parent Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa in FY 2019

- Engagement of PTAs
- Parent and community training sessions
- Information dissemination to community members
- Community events

The majority of community engagement initiatives focus on increasing skills and understanding around reading education and the importance of girls’ education.

Examples of USAID-supported Community and Parent Engagement Work in Sub-Saharan Africa

In **Tanzania**, USAID’s **Tusome Pamoja (“Let’s Read Together”)** activity has developed school scorecards as a community-based performance monitoring tool. These scorecards, which capture key indicators of school performance, were painted on the outside of school buildings in an effort to provide community members with access to information, and increase the transparency, quality, efficiency, and accountability of school performance. The Tusome Pamoja project also creates and maintains 2,563 PTAs or community-based school structures.

USAID **Somalia’s Alternative Basic Education (ABE)** activity partners with a local nongovernmental organization to support an annual book fair, book forums, and writers’ and artists’ workshops, where experienced authors mentor young writers.

In **Mozambique**, USAID’s **Eu Leio (“I Read”)** activity has held training sessions with parents and community members in an effort to remove cultural barriers to school enrollment and encourage parents to enroll their children in formal schooling beginning at age 6. Eu Leio staff specifically discuss with community members the importance of enrolling girls in school. This activity has also provided coaching to PTAs that resulted in reduced teacher and student absenteeism.

USAID **Mali’s Selective Integrated Reading Activity (SIRA)** has trained 304 community development agents to engage the broader community. The community development agents have mobilized parents and community members to encourage reading and distributed home reading kits to 264,169 parents. To further engage the community and spread awareness, SIRA has established more than 100 community libraries, and supported a local radio campaign that raised awareness on reading, mother tongue instruction, and girls’ education.

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