Experience implementing non-mother tongue reading: Tusome in Kenya

Presented by Dunston Kwayumba

RTI International, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA
Access to education has improved in many countries.

Concentration has now shifted to quality rather than access and retention (SDG 4).

Several countries working towards improvement of quality through literacy and mathematics programs.

- Kenya successfully implemented the USAID Primary Math and Reading (PRIMR) Initiative – pilot project.
- Pilot’s success led to national implementation of program.
Tusome Early Grade Reading Activity

1. **Objective**: improve primary literacy outcomes for 7 million Kenyan children in early grades

2. **Scope**: regular primary schools, alternative provision of education and training (APBET) programs, special needs education (SNE) programs, and primary teacher training colleges (PTTC)

3. **Methods**: teaching and learning materials, in-service training, and classroom instruction support

4. **Duration**: 2015 – 2019
Literacy programs are seen as panaceas to improve overall student scores.

Literacy programs are shown to improve literacy, but there is not sufficient evidence that improved literacy directly impacts other subjects or overall student scores.

Most programs have worked at pilot level but not at scale.
Research Questions

❑ What was the effect of the literacy intervention on English and Kiswahili courses?

❑ What was the effect of the literacy intervention on other courses at Early Grade?

❑ What factors facilitated improved learning outcomes in English, Kiswahili, and other courses?
Study Locale – Kiambu County
Methods

Sequential explanatory mixed methods design

Phase 1
- Data collected from teachers in 132 schools
- Collection of class lists for 2015 and 2016

Phase 2
- In-depth interviews with Class 2 teachers, head teachers, Curriculum Support Officers
- Focus group discussions with Class 3 pupils
Results

- 132 schools covered, 132 teachers interviewed
- Pupil database comprised 6387 data points for 2015 and 6285 for 2016
- Analyses look at the perception on the trend of performance between the two years
- Actual measure in the difference between scores in 2015 and 2016
- Differences reported are statistically significant at \( p<0.001 \)
Teachers’ Perception on the Trend of Performance before and after Tusome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>Constant</th>
<th>Deteriorated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subjects</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance in Languages before and after Tusome

- English ORF: 77.4% (2015) vs. 90.8% (2016)
- English subject: 71.4% (2015) vs. 79.9% (2016)
- Kiswahili ORF: 84.7% (2015) vs. 92.1% (2016)
- Kiswahili subject: 75.8% (2015) vs. 82.3% (2016)
Performance in other courses before and after Tusome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effect Sizes

- English ORF: 0.54
- English: 0.32
- Kiswahili ORF: 0.39
- Kiswahili: 0.30
- Maths: 0.28
- Science: 0.13
- Social Studies: 0.30
- Overall: 0.33
Reasons...
Proportion of pupils who had a textbook by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Kiswahili</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>95.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

- Literature shows implementation in mother tongue works. Implementation in the second and third language also works.

- Language interventions result in improvement not only in language courses (subjects) but also in other courses (subjects).