

Overcoming Duality: Conducting Mixed Methods Research on Non-Formal Schools in Potou, Senegal



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Research Questions

What are the learning levels of children in rural Koranic schools (*daaras*) and community-based schools?
How do daaras prepare children for formal school?
What are the challenges with implementing and running community based schools?

Background

Primary school enrollment rate in the MVP Potou cluster is extremely low (~40%), but it is suspected that many more children are attending non-formal Koranic schools (*daaras*).

Only 39% of children that attend daaras also attend formal French school.

In July 2014, MPV launched a community-based school (ECB) initiative to help school-age children not attending primary school transition into primary schools and learn vocational skills.

Methodology

Classroom observations.

Interviews with daara proprietors (12).

Interviews with ECB teachers (7).

Student early-reading Arabic literacy test.



Ages 6-18
n=123

Key Findings

Students are learning basic pre-reading skills, but reading comprehension levels are low.

Daara students attending French school score better in Arabic reading comprehension.

Location matters: clear variation in overall performance levels across daaras.

Parents are willing to pay a high price to send children to daara vs. free French school.

Communities want the daara education to be recognized by the state.

ECB teachers are well trained, but face difficulties recruiting targeted students.

