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Baseline Evaluation – Early-Grade Reading Intervention Information Sheet and Consent Form (Parents/Caregivers - Home background instrument)

Who we are

Hello! We are a data collect consortium contracted to collect information for the Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS II). We are Social Data Collectors (SDC) and JET Education Services (JET).

What we are doing

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) with support from the Mpumalanga Education Department asked SDC/JET to evaluate the success of two reading interventions that the DBE developed. The EGRS II project is donor funded by the USAID. The DBE's interventions will differ in how they use teacher training and teacher coaching. DBE wants to improve the early acquisition of English as First Additional Language among Grade 1 and Grade 2 learners to improve English reading and literacy proficiency. The evaluation hopes to find out if the planned interventions work and if giving them to more primary schools in the country can be afforded. The interventions are going to be implemented in a random sample of 100 primary schools in Mpumalanga Province. Grade 1 learners should benefit in 2017 and when they are in Grade 2 in 2018. There are also 80 control schools. We as evaluators do not know if a school is a project or a control school so that the evaluation can remain "blind" (independent). DBE itself will inform schools to which group they belong. We now ask if you will provide some home background information to us before the project starts. You are one of the parents or the main caregiver of one of the 20 learners from Grade 1 who were randomly selected for the evaluation component from your child's school.*

Your participation

We would like to ask you to read through the rest of this information sheet. It tells you more about the evaluation and asks if you would be prepared to participate in it by completing a short background questionnaire. If you are prepared to do so, please complete the short questionnaire for us and sign the consent form that is part of the questionnaire.

The questions are about the conditions and support at home and school that make it easy or difficult for a Grade 1 child to learn to read well. We think it will take only 10-15 minutes to answer these background questions. Twenty children were randomly selected from the Grade 1 group in each of the 100 project and 80 control schools** to participate in the evaluation. Because your child was selected, you also now receive these documents and request. All the Grade 1 learners and their teachers will be part of the intervention in the project schools. We are also asking the school principal and Grade 1 teachers to complete evaluation questionnaires for us. If the interventions are a success, and if DBE can find enough money, they hope to give it to more schools, teachers, learners and parents in this and other provinces.

Please understand that you do not have to participate. **(Your participation is voluntary.)** Nobody can force you to complete the questionnaire. You alone decide about that. If you do not want to do it, nothing negative will happen to you. Even if you now agree to start completing the questions, you may stop at any time and not continue. You may also decide not to answer any questions/s that you do not want to answer.

Confidentiality

Information that may give away that it was you who gave certain answers is coded as a number as soon as possible, and removed from the answers you give. Any such numbers and lists of names will be kept in a locked cabinet or

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office. It will not be seen by others and will be kept confidential, unless the law prohibits that. Your answers and information may be reviewed by people who have to make sure that our research is done properly. It includes members of the Research

Ethics Committee (REC). (All of these people have to keep your identity confidential.) Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. If needed, we will ask for your permission in future. All the information provided by the school, teachers, learners and parents will be given coded identity numbers and kept on password-protected computers.

Risks/discomforts

We do not see large risks in your participation. However, you may feel embarrassed about physical conditions at home or at the Grade 1 child's school. You may also fear that someone will criticise what you know or how you support this child. We will handle all your information confidentially and anonymously, and use it only for this evaluation. We will not share evaluation information, which can identify you, with anyone else. The main reason for asking you to provide the information is to evaluate the impact of the planned interventions.

Benefits

The main purpose of DBE's project (in 2017 and 2018) is to improve Grade 1 and Grade 2 learners' reading proficiency through teachers. In project schools, teachers will increase their subject knowledge and teaching skills. Such teacher changes are very likely to have a positive impact on learners' reading proficiency and achievement.

The project and its evaluation plan to give regular information to the intervention service providers working in each school. After completion of the mid-term evaluation after November 2017 and the full evaluation by November 2018, the findings will be made available as soon as possible at concluding seminars and in official reports to the DBE and senior education officials of Mpumalanga Province. Schools will form part of such dissemination. The research and evaluation team also intends to publish its findings in peer-reviewed academic journals. The identity or name of your child and his/her teacher and school will never be attached to any of the information that you provide, or information released through articles.

Who to contact if you have been harmed or have any concerns

This research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at University of Witwatersrand. If you have any complaints about ethical aspects of the research or feel that you have been harmed in any way by participating in this study, please call the Wits Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), on Tel 011 717 1408 or at the following e-mail address: Lucille.Mooragan@wits.ac.za.

If you have concerns or questions about the evaluation, you may call the project leader, Ms Janeli Kotze, at Tel: 012 357 3200 | Call Centre: 0800 202 933 or email at Kotze.J@dbe.gov.za.

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