



UNLOCK LITERACY

Globally, learning poverty has increased since the worst shock to education and learning in recorded history, the COVID-19 pandemic, with an estimated 70% of 10-year-olds unable to read and understand a simple written text in low and middle income countries¹.

Unlock Literacy (UL) is World Vision’s evidence-based model for ensuring the children aged 6-9 develop foundational literacy skills and are educated for life. Since 2012, World Vision has rigorously tested and refined Unlock Literacy developing an evidence base for its effectiveness, adaptability and scalability across contexts, particularly where children are most vulnerable.

Unlock Literacy works holistically across the education ecosystem, from homes, communities, schools and local systems to build stakeholder capacities to support children’s literacy and love of learning, reaching children in and out of school. The model is designed to guide schools, parents, caregivers, and communities to make learning fun, creative, and child-centred, and is a response to the growing evidence of learning gaps that show a clear need to increase the effectiveness of reading skills development.

Components of Unlock Literacy



CAREGIVER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Using social behaviour change, caregivers build skills and practices to support playful learning, equitable care, home literacy practices and engage in their children’s education at home, school and in the community. Community actors are equipped to provide community-based reading clubs with quality, inclusive, structured sessions to all children (in and out of school) supporting core reading skills and social emotional learning.



TEACHER TRAINING AND COACHING

Teachers are trained and coached to apply child-centred pedagogy to early grade instruction within existing curriculum frameworks and teacher development systems.



TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Support for the creation or replication of low-cost, locally relevant, local language, accessible materials, including digital resources, for teaching and learning.



SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

Unlock Literacy works to strengthen the relationships and capacities of school leaders and families and communities, as well as middle tier education actors to support quality and coaching, to strengthen accountability and build a strong, resilient education system that ensures all children are learning



MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING

Each Unlock Literacy programme has a robust assessment and design grounded in reading assessment of children, understanding home and school learning environments and teacher and caregiver practices. Formative assessment (by teachers) and quality monitoring (by stakeholders and programme) inform adaptation and learning. All contribute to a growing body of evidence to influence local, national and global policy and practice.



¹ 2022, World Bank - <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/state-of-global-learning-poverty>



READING SCORES

A meta-analysis across 10 countries found that the reading scores of children participating in Unlock Literacy reflected gains of more than an additional year of learning (SD 0.3-0.99) in 7 countries; while subgroups of marginalised children made significant gains in 3 countries². Across UL programmes, participation in community literacy activities is strongly correlated with improved reading outcomes.



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Research findings show that children who attend reading clubs are not only developing their literacy skills and interest in reading, but also developing social-emotional skills, such as building their self-confidence, social behaviour and learning values³.



EQUITY

Comparative studies concluded that UL has a positive impact on all readers- children struggling, succeeding and those in between- all improving reading scores. In many contexts, children who started with the lowest reading scores made the greatest progress. UL is particularly effective in low-resource settings.



LOCAL CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

Unlock literacy stimulates community networks and increases active local partnerships for children’s learning. UL contributes to sustainable local capacity by building on existing structures and relationships, complements the local curriculum and extends safe, inclusive, play-based learning spaces beyond schools or homes. Reading clubs provide continuity of learning in many contexts where school is disrupted.

Where we work



Programme Examples

Nepal: Across 32 schools in Katali Nepal from 2015-2016, learners in UL schools and communities significantly outperformed in literacy skills compared to their counterparts in control schools. Moreover, learning inequalities were reduced – with girls, children from lower caste or Tharu ethnicity who performed lower at baseline, catching up on reading scores by endline.

Honduras: Beginning in 2021, Unlock Literacy has reached 270 urban and rural communities, partnering with 3,059 community facilitators reaching 17,808 children (1,494 with a disability). After two years during COVID, without in person learning, reading camps have become a very important space for safety and socialisation, while also helping children learn. Teacher: ‘Before, they (the children) didn’t socialise with each other. It was like they had become closed and distant...the reading clubs really help

the children learn, improve their reading comprehension, even their values are strengthened here’.

Rwanda: World Vision leads the Uburezi Iwacu ‘Homes and Communities’ project supported by USAID, that improves literacy environments at home, increases community involvement in promoting literacy and improves literacy learning opportunities for children with disabilities. Positive parenting approaches are combined with community reading clubs, libraries and building the capacity of community education workers and volunteers. To date UL trained 9,682 reading club volunteers to manage community based Unlock Literacy activities for 144,141 primary school age children. Over five years, the project will reach 889,983 children (226,706 in pre-primary, 663,277 in lower primary and 26,531 children with disabilities).

² 2021, <https://www.wvi.org/publications/research/education/multi-country-review-world-visions-unlock-literacy-programme>

³ 2022, <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/handle/10625/61942>