



World Vision

UGANDA



**IMPACT OF THE UNLOCK  
LITERACY PROJECT MODEL ON  
THE READING RESULTS FOR  
GIRLS AND BOYS IN EARLY  
GRADES IN UGANDA**

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# IMPACT OF THE UNLOCK LITERACY PROJECT MODEL ON THE READING RESULTS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS IN EARLY GRADES IN UGANDA

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AP</b>	Area Programme
<b>BBC</b>	Book Bank Custodians
<b>CCTs</b>	Coordinating Centre Tutors
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>DEAR</b>	Drop Everything and Read
<b>DEOs</b>	District Education Officers
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>EPPE</b>	Effective Pre-school and Primary Education Project
<b>HLE</b>	Home Learning Environments
<b>HLEQ</b>	Home Learning Environment Questionnaire
<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>LABE</b>	Literacy and Adult Basic Education
<b>LARA</b>	Literacy Achievement and Retention Activities
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MEAL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
<b>MoES</b>	Ministry of Education and Sports
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MTE</b>	Mid-Term Evaluation
<b>NULP</b>	Northern Uganda Literacy Project
<b>P.2</b>	Primary two
<b>P.7</b>	Primary seven
<b>P1</b>	Primary one
<b>P3</b>	Primary three
<b>P5</b>	Primary five
<b>PLE</b>	Primary Leaving Examination
<b>RCF</b>	Reading Club Facilitators
<b>RCT</b>	Reading Community Teachers
<b>RTI</b>	Research Triangle International
<b>SHRP</b>	School Health and Reading Program
<b>SMC</b>	School Management Committee
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>STAR</b>	School-Based Test About Reading
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>ToTs</b>	Trainers of Trainers
<b>TZS</b>	Tanzanian Shilling
<b>UBOS</b>	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
<b>UGX</b>	Ugandan Shilling
<b>UL</b>	Unlock Literacy
<b>UNCST</b>	National Council for Science and Technology
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UPE</b>	Universal Primary Education
<b>USA</b>	United State of America
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>UTSEP</b>	Uganda Teacher and School Effectiveness Project
<b>WV</b>	World Vision

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

World Vision is implementing the Unlock Literacy Model, which aims to empower schools, parents, and communities to support children's literacy development and to promote strong literacy habits among early grade learners both inside and outside the classroom. The model seeks to equip learners with skills namely, letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. By focusing on enhancing literacy instruction, the model ensures that children not only learn to read but also remain motivated in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the Unlock Literacy (UL) Project Model on the reading results for girls and boys in early grades in selected World Vision implementing districts in Uganda. The specific objectives were:

1. To determine the extent to which the Unlock Literacy Model contributes to increased reading results of children.
2. To establish whether the Unlock Literacy Model contributes to strengthened teaching instruction in Primary 1–3.
3. To assess the extent to which the Unlock Literacy Model interventions are influencing support by parents or guardians and communities for children's reading.
4. To establish whether the Unlock literacy model contributes to increased support by education authorities for children's reading
5. To identify the key lessons so far learned during implementation of the UL Model.
6. To determine the cost of the UL model in the Ugandan setting.
7. To find out the challenges to implementing the Unlock literacy model in primary schools.

The project involved the use of a mixed research approach encompassing both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The project was based on quasi experimental and descriptive research designs. The sample comprised primary three and five learners, World Vision staff in the programme areas, P1- P3 teachers, district education officials, community leaders and Reading Club Facilitators (RCFs). Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and cross-tabulation, and inferential analysis in terms of Student's t-test. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic and content analyses.

### Findings

Overall, the Unlock Literacy Model has a significant positive influence on early grade reading outcomes. The proportion of P3 learners achieving minimum reading proficiency increased by 55% from baseline to 2024. Intervention schools consistently outperformed control schools, that is P3 learners in intervention schools scored an average of 75.2% compared to 63.4% in control schools, and P5 learners scored 90.1% compared to 77.5% in control schools. This indicates a substantial and statistically significant contribution of the model to improved literacy performance. The breakdown of the findings is as follows:

### Contribution to Increased Reading Results for Children

The model has significantly enhanced learners' performance across the five core literacy skills; letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Gender-disaggregated data shows balanced gains, with girls in P5 particularly excelling (87.5%). These results affirm the model's effectiveness in promoting equitable literacy outcomes for both boys and girls.

### Strengthened Teaching Instruction in P1–P3

The findings indicate that 88.9% of trained teachers demonstrate at least one core reading skill in their instruction, indicating improved pedagogical practices. Further, 86.2% of classrooms are print-rich, and learners engage more in peer reading, teacher-guided reading, and independent practice fostering a stronger foundation for literacy.

### Increased Support by Parents and Communities for Children's Reading

While 60.9% of learners participate in literacy activities with household members, only 34.9% of parents actively support reading readiness at home. Community literacy centres show strong quality performance (75.4%), though regular attendance by children remains low at 35%, highlighting the need to boost participation and engagement at community level.

### Support by Education Authorities

All supported schools (100%) as a result of the implementation of the model receive regular oversight from the trained education officials. This supervision included monitoring classroom instruction, providing pedagogical feedback, and supporting the implementation of literacy activities aligned with the model.

### Cost of Implementation

The model's implementation cost was approximately 30 USD per child in the initial year, decreasing to 15.9 USD in subsequent years as capital costs declined. These figures position the model as highly cost-effective and scalable, especially when compared with regional government spending on basic education.

### Key Lessons Learnt

1. Early grade interventions yield significant impact, as evidenced by the 55% increase in P3 learners achieving minimum reading proficiency. This affirms the importance of investing in foundational literacy during the early years of education. Also, structured teacher training proved effective in enhancing instructional quality, with trained teachers demonstrating improved delivery of core reading skills and creating more engaging, print-rich classroom environments.
2. Community and parental involvement are critical components of literacy development. However, low attendance and limited home-based support suggest the need for more robust strategies to increase participation. The use of local reading volunteers is particularly effective, demonstrating the value of empowering grassroots actors to support literacy beyond the classroom.
3. The role of local education authorities in supervising implementation is beneficial, but teacher transfers disrupt continuity in implementation, suggesting the need for policy measures to stabilize teacher placement in project schools.
4. The model's cost-effectiveness by dropping from 30 USD to 15.9 USD per child per year positions the unlock literacy model as a scalable and affordable solution for improving literacy outcomes in low-resource settings.

### Areas of Future Research

The following areas still need more engagement to get better solutions:

1. Sustainability of community literacy initiatives requires deeper exploration, especially given collapse some of them in a number of programme areas. It is important to understand what has led to the collapse of some learning centres.
2. Teacher attrition presents another challenge, particularly with trained teachers frequently being transferred. Understanding the reasons behind this transfer of the teachers and developing strategies to reduce transfers is important.
3. The development and sustainability of community-generated reading materials also demand further study. While UL has made progress in making resources locally relevant, the continued production and distribution of these materials beyond the project lifecycle is not certain. Research should examine how communities can take ownership of these processes, with support from school management and local government structures.
4. There is also a pressing need to understand the long-term outcomes of early literacy interventions, as gains made in lower primary appear to wane in later grades. Investigating whether early improvements in reading persist through upper primary and affect national exam performance can inform how the UL model might be adapted to support sustained literacy development.
5. Reading comprehension remains the most underperforming skill area, suggesting a gap in both teaching strategies and instructional focus.

In light of these focus areas, several study questions are proposed:

1. What are the underlying factors contributing to the collapse of community learning centres in some programme areas?
2. What factors contribute to the frequent transfer of trained literacy teachers in UL-supported schools?
3. What conditions support the sustainability of communities engaging in the production and distribution of locally relevant reading beyond external support?
4. How do early literacy gains from the UL model evolve as learners progress into upper primary grades, and what influence might these gains have on later academic performance?
5. What instructional practices and contextual influences shape reading comprehension outcomes among early grade learners in low-resource settings?



## CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT

### 1.1 Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the Unlock Literacy project model on the reading results for girls and boys in early grades in Uganda. The results cover various aspects including demographics, teachers' practices, after-school reading activity participation, learners literacy competences, reading clubs, procurement and use of reading materials, teacher capacity development, and community involvement in the implementation of Unlock Literacy project model. The key findings and recommendations offer valuable insights for improving the Unlock Literacy Project Model, ultimately contributing to the improvement of learners reading Literacy.

### 1.2 Background to the Study

Literacy is essential for educational success and underpins a child's ability to access the breadth of the curriculum and achieve highly across it (Hughson, 2022). Children who lack adequate levels of literacy risk experiencing a narrowed curriculum, ongoing difficulties with self-expression and limited future pathways (Denton et al, 2015). Globally, 250 million children cannot read, write or do basic math even though half have attended school for at least four years (World Vision, 2021). In low- and middle-income countries alone, 91% of 15-24-year-olds are literate, relative to 85% of adults worldwide (Bridge 2022).

In the case of Uganda, adult literacy rate in Kampala stands at 76.5% with males at 82.6% and females at 70.8% (UNESCO). However, it is a little lower in rural areas for example Busoga at 71.7%, and Lango at 74.9% except in Karamoja sub-region where is extremely low at 25 (Uganda National Population and Housing Census, 2024). Overall literacy rate in Uganda is as low as 74% (UBOS, 2024). Among children, by 2015, only 30% of children aged between 9-13 years old were able to read a short story in local language or English, with 27% being boys and 32% being girls (Uwezo, 2017). From this proportions, 28% were from poor communities, while 44% were from rich families, with 24% coming from public schools, while 44% were from private schools (Uwezo, 2017). The impact of COVID-19 made matters worse for children in Uganda. The Uwezo learning assessment report of 2021 indicated that the percentage of children (between P.3 to P.7) who could not read anything from a P.2-level English story almost doubled from 6.2% in 2018 to 11.6% in 2021 (Uwezo, 2021).

Over the past fifteen years, Uganda has implemented a variety of interventions to promote literacy development, significantly impacting children's reading skills and educational outcomes. Some of these initiatives were small programmes in targeted locations, while others are whole country or regional initiatives. Some of these initiatives include: Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE), implemented in two phases from 2009 to 2013 and from 2014 to 2018 in Northern Uganda focused on mother tongue education to ensure that children learn in their native languages, enhancing understanding and retention (Heugh, 2013). Later it was followed by Literacy Boost programme, an initiative of Save the Children in partnership with World Vision. The programme that was implemented in Amuru in Northern Uganda engages communities in promoting literacy through supportive practices (Save the Children, 2010).

Another initiative was the Northern Uganda Literacy Project (NULP), an early grade reading intervention for children in grades one to three (Buhl-Wiggers et al., 2023).

The whole country initiatives came through the USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Program (2012-2019) that worked through Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) systems to improve reading achievement in 12 local languages and English in Grades 1 to 4 in 4,097 government primary schools (RTI, 2019). It was closely followed by another USAID supported Uganda Literacy Achievement and Retention Activities (LARA) initiative which also focused on improving literacy rates and increasing student retention through targeted interventions that strengthened safe and supportive school environments (LARA, 2018).

In an attempt to scale the School Health and Reading model, Ministry of Education and Sports initiated the Uganda Teacher and School Effectiveness Project (UTSEP) from March 2015 and ended by March 2020. UTSEP's intervention in primary education, although a literacy promotion initiative has largely focused on enhancing teacher and instructor competencies and practices, supply of instructional materials for learners and teachers, intensifying teacher supervision and school inspections, increasing the capacity of school leadership and accountability to the community and improving basic school facilities (MoES, 2020). Closely, we also have Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) Day that was launched by the Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration with Peace Corps Uganda on March 26, 2014, with the aim of promoting a national reading culture and love for learning across the country (Nanyonga, 2019).

These initiatives continue to go silent when the projects close. As McEwan notes, in developing countries, only around 10 percent of RCTs that measure learning collect follow-up outcomes more than one month after the conclusion of the treatment (McEwan, 2015). While some studies have found particular interventions to be

effective in the short run, evidence of long-lasting effects remains scarce (Buhl-Wiggers et al., 2023). Literacy-based interventions focused on improving reading are an important way to improve student outcomes (Fang & Wei, 2010).

Literacy interventions in Uganda face several shortcomings, including inconsistent implementation across regions, which leads to unequal access to resources. Many rural areas still lack trained teachers and sufficient reading materials, exacerbating educational disparities. Additionally, funding limitations hinder the sustainability of programs and adequate teacher training. In an attempt to address these challenges in a holistic manner, the World Vision's Unlock Literacy initiative has emerged, striving to improve literacy skills among young learners through innovative approaches and community involvement.



## CHAPTER TWO: THE UNLOCK LITERACY MODEL DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Introduction

The Unlock Literacy (UL) Model is one of the many models that have been initiated in different communities in the world to support development of literacy among children in primary schools. This section presents the model description, strategic relevance and components.

### 2.2 Strategic Relevance of the model

Unlock Literacy is the World Vision's evidence-based model for ensuring the children aged 6-9 develop foundational literacy skills and are educated for life. The model seeks to align with WV's child wellbeing aspiration for all children to be 'educated for life' by ensuring that children demonstrate improved reading outcomes based on the five core reading skills of Unlock Literacy (World Vision 2017). Since 2012, World Vision has rigorously tested and refined Unlock Literacy developing an evidence base for its effectiveness, adaptability and scalability across context, particularly where children are most vulnerable (World Vision, 2018). The model also brings a holistic approach that works with teachers, parents and community members to create a supportive literacy environment that can sustain reading improvements for children both in and out of school (World Vision, 2017). Unlock Literacy focuses on helping children improve five core skills of reading acquisition that include: letter knowledge, sounding out words, reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (World Vision 2021).

UL model strengthens Literacy teaching and instruction in P1 -P3, ensuring children are learning to read, and helps them remain motivated to learn while

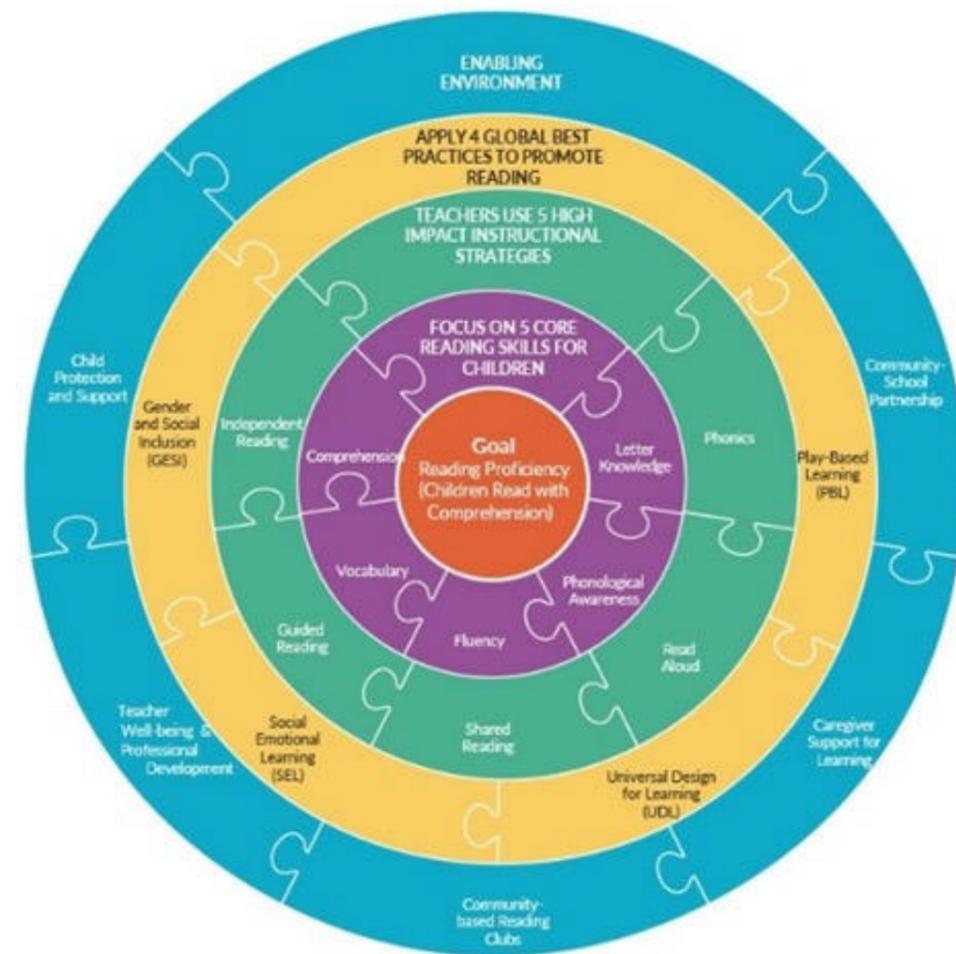


Figure 1: The Unlock Literacy Model, World Vision 2019

## 2.3 Components of the model

The model is implemented following five basic components as explained below:

- Reading assessments: Baseline and end line assessments to measure children's reading levels. The World Vision STAR tool is used to assess children's reading abilities, evaluate their learning needs and support education stakeholders to track learner progress.
- Teacher training: Focus on teacher capacity to deliver interactive literacy lessons, create print rich environments and motivate learning. The support helps teachers to incorporate core reading skills into their curriculum.
- Home literacy practices: Parents are given tools and tips to support their children's literacy development at home.
- Community activities: Communities are supported to engage all readers in fun activities outside of school. The key areas of support are in out of school reading camps, and citizen voice and action model.
- Low-cost materials: Support for the creation of locally relevant, grade appropriate, and accessible reading materials for teaching and learning.

## 2.4 Intervention Outcomes

Unlock Literacy goes beyond classroom learning to reinforce children's literacy skills at home and in their communities. The methodology of Unlock Literacy is built around its four-pronged approach: assessments, teacher training, community action, and the creation of teaching and learning materials to significantly improve children's core reading skills. At home, the project provides child-friendly reading materials and encourages caregivers to undertake literacy-supporting activities. In the community, Reading Camps are developed where trained leaders help children improve their reading through a curriculum containing games related to vocabulary, letter knowledge, phonemic awareness and comprehension (World Vision, 2017).

## 2.5 Implementation Progress, Key Result Areas, Impact Level Outputs

World Vision Uganda's Unlock Literacy initiative has achieved substantial progress in strengthening early grade education through a comprehensive approach that integrates teacher training, community engagement, and school-based support. Since its inception, the program has trained 14,800 teachers across 25 field offices in five core reading skills; letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension empowering them to deliver child-centred instruction (World Vision Uganda, 2024a). To complement classroom efforts, over 160,000 parents and community facilitators have been equipped to support literacy development at home and within their communities (World Vision Uganda, 2024a). These combined efforts have reached nearly one million children in Grades 1–3 across 29 field offices, with reading progress monitored using World Vision's STAR tool (World Vision Uganda, 2024b).

To reinforce learning beyond the classroom, the initiative has established 306 community reading clubs and mobilized 1,530 literacy volunteers, contributing to improved literacy outcomes for 684,750 children in Primary One to Three (World Vision Uganda, 2024a). Over 300 reading clubs have been launched, supported by more than 1,100 volunteers, and 10,929 children have participated in community-based literacy activities facilitated by 214 functional community systems (World Vision Uganda, 2024a). At the school level, 550 schools have received support through the provision of reading materials, targeted teacher training, and the strengthening of School Management Committees (SMCs). A total of 541 SMCs have incorporated community voices and student retention strategies into their school improvement plans, ensuring that local perspectives guide educational enhancement. In promoting safe and inclusive learning environments, 6,416 teachers (3,272 female, 3,144 male) from 879 schools have been trained in and are implementing safe school standards, an effort that contributes to both improved learning conditions and reduced dropout rates (World Vision, 2018).

The Unlock Literacy intervention model in Uganda aims to strengthen teaching instruction in Grades 1–3 by equipping Master Trainers and teachers with effective, learner-centred pedagogical strategies that move away from rote learning towards interactive, skills-based instruction. This has been complemented by increased availability and proper management of locally relevant reading materials in schools, supporting improved reading development. Beyond the classroom, the program has fostered community ownership of literacy through training community mobilisers who facilitate literacy activities such as reading clubs, while also empowering staff and community members to create and distribute culturally appropriate learning resources. Recognizing the vital role of parents, the intervention has engaged them through mobilisers, enhancing parental knowledge and skills to support children's literacy at home, which has contributed to a gradual cultural shift valuing home-based literacy reinforcement. Sustainability is further pursued through training local education authorities in Unlock Literacy methodologies, enabling them to conduct teacher supervision, classroom support, and curriculum alignment, thereby fostering a more responsive education management system focused on early grade reading. Collectively, these integrated efforts have created an enabling environment for improved literacy outcomes among early learners, involving schools, communities, parents, and education authorities in a collaborative approach to literacy development.

## 2.6 Theory of Change

Unlock Literacy theory of change proposes that improving reading fluency and comprehension among early grade primary school children is possible through partnerships with schools and communities. This happens through three pathways of change. Firstly, enhanced teacher training would lead to improved instructional methods, resulting in enhanced learner learning (Pathway 1: Teacher Training → Improved Instructional Methods → Enhanced Learner Learning). Secondly, increased community engagement would foster greater parental involvement, leading to better learner outcomes (Pathway 2: Community Engagement → Increased Parental Involvement → Better Learner Outcomes). Thirdly, provision of Literacy resources would create a conducive learning environment, increasing learner motivation (Pathway 3: Resource Provision → Improved Learning Environment → Increased Learner Motivation) (World Vision, 2021).

The project's intermediate outcomes include increased access to quality literacy education, enhanced teacher training and capacity, improved learning environment and resources, and increased community engagement and support. Thus, applying the ToC enables the Unlock Literacy project to take a systematic, effective, and adaptive approach to improving literacy outcomes as shown in Figure 2.

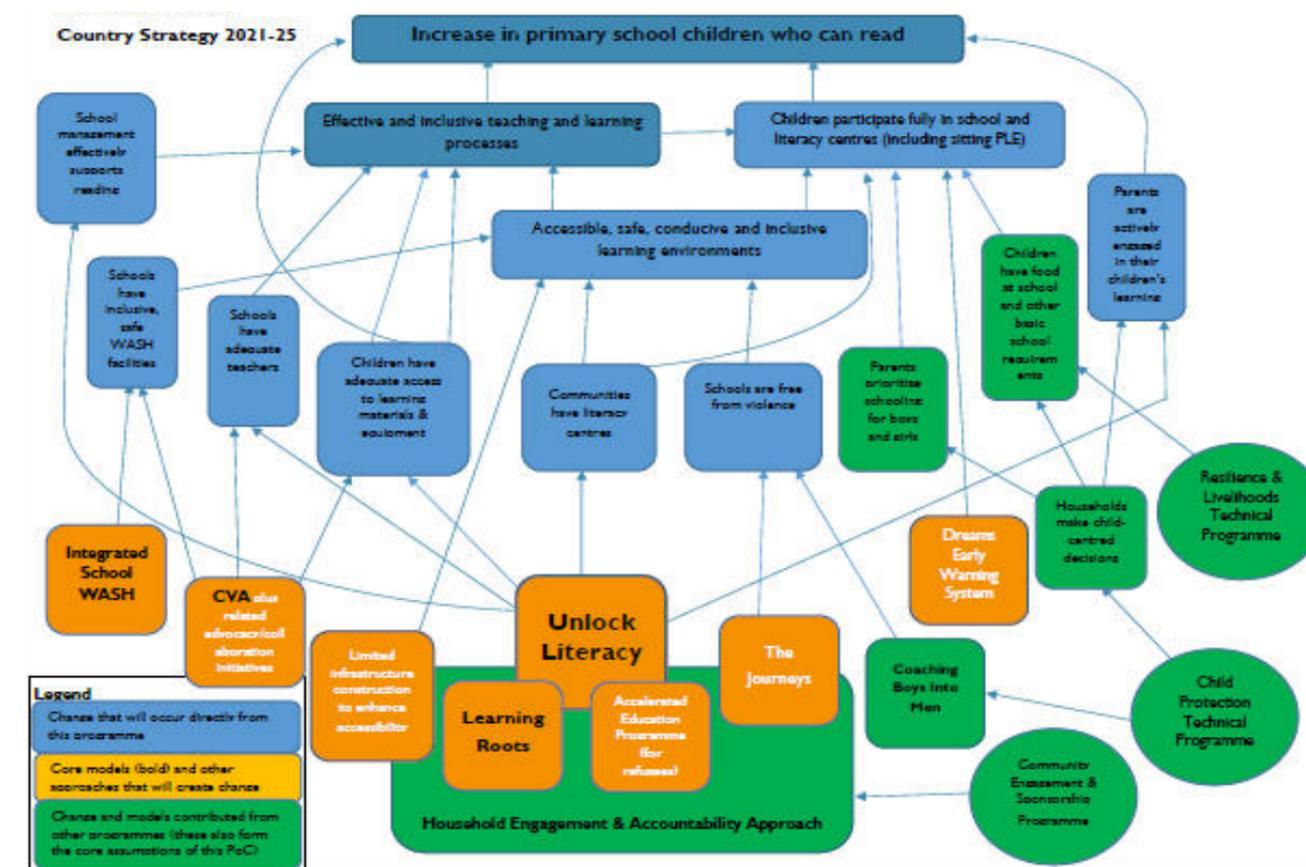


Figure 2: World Vision Strategy 2021-25

## CHAPTER THREE: IMPACT EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS AND INDICATORS

### 3.1 Introduction

Based on the ToR, the following objectives, questions and indicators were developed to guide the evaluation.

### 3.2 Evaluation Objectives

The impact evaluation was guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine the extent to which the Unlock Literacy Model contributes to increased reading results of children.
2. To establish whether the Unlock Literacy Model contributes to strengthened teaching instruction in Primary 1–3.
3. To assess the extent to which the Unlock Literacy Model interventions are influencing support by parents or guardians and communities for children's reading.
4. To establish whether the Unlock Literacy Model contributes to increased support by education authorities for children's reading.
5. To identify the key lessons so far learned during implementation of the Unlock Literacy Model.
6. To determine the cost of the Unlock Literacy Model in the Ugandan setting.
7. To find out the challenges to implementing the Unlock Literacy Model in primary schools

### 3.3 Evaluation Questions

Below is the summary of the evaluation questions. Detailed questions that guided the study can be seen in Annex.

1. Are there indications of the impact of the UL model interventions on improved reading results of children especially the most vulnerable children?
2. To what extent are the UL model interventions improving reading results of children especially the most vulnerable children?
3. To what extent does the model contribute to strengthened local and community education systems?
4. What gender dynamics influence reading results of children, especially the most vulnerable children?
5. What are the key lessons learned so far?
6. What is the cost of implementing the model?

### 3.4 Scope of the Evaluation

The impact evaluation done to cover 9 out of the 32 Area Programmes, 3 in Eastern, 3 in Northern and 3 in Western Uganda that had a relatively stable model implementation for the last five years. The evaluation followed the objectives but guided by the evaluation criterion as provided for in the ToR. These criteria included Impact, effectiveness, sustainability, cross cutting issues, lessons learnt and cost implication.

### 3.5 Programme Indicators

The UL model has a number of outcomes and indicators that it strives to achieve as shown in table 1.

Table 1: The Unlock Literacy Model Outcomes and Indicators

SN	Outcome	Indicators
1.	Strengthened teaching instruction in Grades 1–3	Proportion of Unlock Literacy trained teachers utilizing skills acquired to teach reading % of Grade 1–3 Unlock Literacy classrooms with print-rich environments
2.	Increased support by communities for children's reading	% Unlock Literacy reading clubs achieving minimum standards % of children attending reading clubs regularly
3.	Increased support by parents for children's learning	% children (boys, girls) reporting an increased frequency of participation in literacy activities with household members
4.	Increased support by education authorities for children's learning	Proportion of Unlock Literacy schools receiving supervision by a trained local education authority

Source: WV Framework of indicators and alignment to CWB objectives

## CHAPTER FOUR: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 4.1 Introduction

This section focuses on review of related literature in the context of contextualising the model and related interventions that have been employed to support literacy development in different countries.

### 4.2 Contextualising Unlock Literacy Model Support Systems

Different scholars have carried related studies showing the relationship between literacy models implementation and reading literacy. For example, in a study involving teachers in Iran, Alibakhshi et al. (2021) explored the antecedents of English teachers' self-efficacy. The findings revealed that support from administration, support from colleagues, and support from the community influenced teacher's language teaching efficacy. This means that support such as that provided by the UL model influences teachers' instruction. In a review, Díaz-Iso et al. (2022) analysed the complex spectrum of interventions to improve reading competence in primary education learners. The review revealed that of enhancing instructional quality was an intervention for improving reading competence. In a study involving twenty kindergarten children in Qatar, Ihmeideh and Al-Maadadi (2020) investigated the effect of family literacy programs on developing kindergarten children's early literacy skills. The findings indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the two groups as children in the experimental group had higher scores in the early literacy test compared to the control group. Among the sample studied, boys' and girls' early literacy scores were not markedly differentiated. Furthermore, the findings indicated that there was no difference due to the interaction between group and gender.

In a review, Jabbar et al. (2021) revealed that parental beliefs in the value of reading and parental support supervising home-Literacy practices were important factors that inculcated reading habits in children. The review highlighted the importance of parental involvement in improving the reading habits of children hence the need to equip parents with effective plans to improve reading in children. In a qualitative study, Mrutu and Kulwenza (2024) examined the teaching methods used by teachers to teach reading in lower primary classes at a government primary school in Kocheka Sub County, in Bukedea district Uganda. The study specifically focused on how these methods impacted learners' reading competence. The findings revealed that using a variety of instructional approaches improved reading literacy. However, limited resources were a challenge that hindered learners' reading development. This suggested that using diverse teaching methods and available instructional resources significantly influenced students' reading literacy.

### 4.3 Related Studies on Literacy Improvement Initiatives

Lubaale et al. (2021) used data from the 2018 Uwezo Uganda Learning Assessment survey to analyse the impact of mothers' education on children's literacy outcomes. The findings revealed that as maternal education levels increased, the proportion of children able to read and comprehend a story competently also increased. Similarly, Kiiza et al. (2024) examined the impact of mothers' education on the numeracy and literacy outcomes of children in the Central Sub-Region Districts of Uganda. Their findings revealed that as maternal education levels increased, the proportion of children who were able to read and comprehend a story effectively also increased. These suggest that mothers' involvement in their children's learning contributes to improved reading literacy.

In a study done in Kyankwazi District in Uganda, Nnakalyowa (2019) sought to determine the influence of support supervision in developing children's Literacy in lower primary classes. The findings indicated that support and peer lesson preparation and instructional material development contributed successful children's Literacy development. In a study assessing challenges faced in teaching reading, Lu (2022) used elementary pupils in the Philippines. The study revealed that inadequacy in understanding reading, deficiency reading development, underdeveloped sounds and words recognition, difficulty attending learner's need and insufficient reading materials affected learners reading Literacy.

In their study in the USA, Oliveira et al. (2019) examined the contents of courses related to Literacy instruction using a national sample of primary teachers' undergraduate. The results showed that the most critical features of Literacy instruction are included in the course contents of most programs including phonics. However, reading/writing comprehension skills and assessment and intervention in reading/writing problems were not adequately handled effecting learners reading Literacy. In their study, Rwamwenge et al. (2020) investigated whether instructional materials determined English reading literacy of pupils in UPE Schools in Fort Portal Municipality in Uganda. Their student's t – test results revealed that instructional materials contributed to the variation in pupils' reading literacy in primary schools. In a narrative review, Webber et al. (2021) analysed the instructional strategies for supporting adolescents' reading motivation. The review revealed that instructional strategies that included a strong focus on struggling readers and skills-based goal improved reading Literacy of adolescents.

The literature review above revealed that the Unlock Literacy in terms of supporting teachers (Díaz-Iso et al., 2022; Nnakalyowa, 2019), enhancing instructional quality (Díaz-Iso et al., 2022), increasing stakeholder involvement,



particularly family support (Ihmeideh & Al-Maadadi, 2020; Jabbar et al., 2021), implementing instructional strategies as interventions (Oliveira et al., 2019; Webber et al., 2021) and instructional materials (Rwamwenge et al., 2020) has a significant influence on learners reading Literacy. However, empirical and conceptual gaps emerged. Empirically, there was a scarcity of studies conducted in the Ugandan context, and conceptually, no study had directly investigated the UL model but obliquely through related concepts. These gaps highlighted the need for this study, which directly evaluated the influence of the UL model on learners' reading Literacy in the context of Uganda, addressing the empirical and conceptual gaps in the existing literature.

## CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the methodological aspects that were utilised to implement this study. It includes the research design, estimating counterfactuals, treatment and control groups, sampling strategy, sample size, data collection tools and methods and finally ethical consideration.

### 5.2 Research Design

The project adopted the quasi experimental and descriptive research designs. The quasi-experimental design helped to determine whether a cause-effect relationship existed between Unlock Literacy Model, the treatment and literacy achievement, the outcome (Rogers & Revesz, 2019). The five components of the model had been implemented in the study areas as treatment for the last five years. Literacy achievement was measured using the School-Based Test about Reading (STAR) tool. By applying this tool in both participating and non-participating schools, the study assessed the effectiveness of the Unlock Literacy Model in improving reading achievement of learners in both control and experiment sites. The ecological descriptive study design used explored and characterised the implementation the model to provide a comprehensive understanding of how it was implemented and its impact on learners' literacy achievement (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019). Thus, through the combination of quasi-experimental and descriptive research designs, the study not only assessed the intervention's impact but also described the broader context and factors influencing its implementation and outcomes.

### 5.3 Estimating counterfactuals

To accurately assess the impact of the Unlock Literacy (UL) Project, a robust comparison approach was employed, utilising multiple methods, namely control group, matching and propensity score matching methods to construct valid control groups and estimate the counterfactual scenario. The control group method was primarily used, comparing the outcomes of the treatment group (learners who received the UL Project intervention) with a control group (learners who did not receive the intervention). To ensure comparability, there was matching of learners in the treatment group with similar individuals in the control group based on relevant characteristics that were learners' class and time spent in school. Propensity score matching was used to match learners by ensuring similarity between the treatment and control groups. The control group was carefully selected from regions with over five years of UL Project implementation, ensuring similar contextual factors. After applying these matching and control techniques, the final sample included 31,589 learners. These methods helped create valid comparison groups, isolating the effects of the UL Project and allowing for a clearer understanding of its impact on reading results.

### 5.4 Treatment and Control Groups

In order for quasi experiment to be feasible, we focused on districts in which the UL model had been implemented for at least five years. Those sites had consistent treatment in terms of reading assessments, teacher training, home literacy practices, community activities, low-cost materials production. The control sites had similar environments but not too near each other to result into contamination. Bearing the above in mind, we included the following World Vision programme areas as experiment and nearby districts as control sites. Buikwe, Bugiri and Busia in Eastern Uganda were selected as experiment sites while Kayunga, Namutumba and Namayingo were the control districts. In Northern Uganda, Agago, Omoro and Oyam were identified as the experiment districts, while Abim, Nwoya and Apac were the control districts. In the case of Western Uganda, Hoima, Kikube, and Bundibugyo were selected as the experiment districts; while Masindi, Kakumiro and Ntoroko were the control districts.

In the control sites, the study focused on P3 and P5 children who are undergoing regular literacy instructions by their teachers without any literacy intervention support. The study also focused on their teachers and school environment to determine the support services provided and literacy rich environments present. In the experiment sites, the study focused on P3 and P5 learners, their literacy teachers, school heads, parents, community literacy volunteers and local leaders. In addition, the qualitative aspects of the study included World Vision staff, and district education officials, from the programme areas.

### 5.5 Sampling Strategy

Cluster, simple random and purposive sampling approaches were used to determine the schools to participate in the project. With cluster sampling the total population was divided into a number of relatively small groups or clusters and the sample is randomly selected from the clusters for inclusion purposes (Wang & Cheng, 2020). With sample random sampling, each member of the population had the same chance of being included in the sample and all possible samples of a given size had the same chance of selection (Bhardwaj, 2019). Cluster sampling involved grouping schools according to programme areas for schools involved (intervention schools) in the Unlock Literacy project and an equivalent set of schools not participating in the project in districts neighbouring those with implementing the project. In each category of schools two school were randomly selected to ensure

unbiased selection hence collecting data that can be generalised. For simple random sampling, this involved the use of the lottery method to ensure that each school in every cluster has an equal chance of participating in the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected based on their expertise, experience, or knowledge related to the research topic. This technique is often used when the goal of the study involves gaining in-depth insights and understanding of a particular phenomenon (Campbell et al., 2020). Purposive sampling ensured the likelihood of gathering rich and relevant data.

#### 5.5.1 Quantitative sample size

The sample size was 3,042 primary three and five pupils for quantitative data. This sample was determined basing on Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who indicate that when the study population is less than 10, 000, a sample size of between 10% and 30% is a good representation of the target population. However, complete data was collected from 2315 pupils. This was a response rate of 76.1% which was deemed sufficient, because according to Pielsticker and Hiebl (2020), a response rate of 50% is sufficient in social science studies. Therefore, the data collected was representative of the different learners in the schools.

#### 5.5.2 Qualitative Sample

Specifically, those directly involved in implementing the Unlock Literacy model numbering 99 were selected to provide qualitative responses. These were nine World Vision staff in the programme areas, 18 P1 - P3 teachers, 18 parents, 18 District Education officials, 18 community leaders (political leaders/Local Councils, Village Health Team members and religious leaders) and 18 reading community teachers (RCTs). The dominant local languages spoken in those areas were used because there were a number of languages involved which would complicate the number of tools and translation. However, the final sample of 33 participants that were 18 primary one to three teachers, 18 parents, 18 district education officials, 18 community leaders (political leaders/Local Councils, and religious leaders) and 18 reading community teachers (RCTs)., and six project officers for qualitative respondents was determined after data saturation. Those whose data was incorporated were of 28 participants that were 11 parents, three community leaders, four teachers, eight education officers, and two project officers for qualitative respondents was determined after data saturation.

### 5.6 Data Collection Methods and Tools

The data collection methods employed were; a survey administered using the School Based Test about Reading (STAR) tool, interviews, and observation. The STAR tool was administered to learners to obtain data on their background characteristics, support from parents/ guardian and teachers, and to assess their reading results. Reading was assessed using the test which was one aspect of the STAR tool and evaluated pupils reading skills, including comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. This test provided quantitative data on students' reading abilities, offering valuable insights into the program's effectiveness. Simultaneously, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including technical officers, program managers, and education officials, to gather in-depth qualitative insights into their experiences, perspectives, and opinions. These interviews were conducted in-person or via phone/video calls, allowing for flexibility and convenience. Observation involved systematically collecting information on Unlock Literacy model implementation in unstructured way using a non-predetermined checklist/ protocol, allowing a more flexible and open-ended approach. Observation involved looking at the print richness of classes and the operation community learning centres. By integrating these three data collection methods – questionnaire survey, interview, and observation, there was gathering of robust, reliable, and valid data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research context and informing findings and recommendations.

#### 5.6.1 Tools Used

Tools used in data collection included questionnaire, interview guides, and observation.

#### 5.6.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire collected data on the pupils' background characteristics, support from parents/ guardian and teachers, and assessed their reading Literacy. Reading Literacy was assessed using the test which was an aspect of the STAR tool. The Literacy reading test was designed to assess learners' reading abilities across essential skills that are letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. This test enabled the researcher to establish differences in performance between the experimental and control groups (Em, 2024), providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the Unlock Literacy project in improving learners' reading Literacy skills. By comparing the results of the two groups, the project was able to determine whether the intervention had a significant impact on learners' reading abilities, and to what extent.

### 5.6.3 Key Informant Interview Guides

The interview guides were administered to all stakeholders with authority in early Literacy. The stakeholders included World Vision staff in the programme areas, 18 primary one to three teachers, 18 parents, 18 district education officials, 18 community leaders (political leaders/Local Councils, and religious leaders) 18 reading community teachers (RCTs), and project officers. This group of participants provided information on the policy and context environment shaping Literacy activities in their communities.

### 5.6.4 Observation checklist

The observation checklist was used to observe processes in a natural setting. This involved unstructured Observation with the researchers not using a predetermined checklist allowing for a more flexible and open-ended observation. Observation involved assessing the extent of print rich environment in the schools and the state of the community Literacy reading centres. This enabled assessing the extent to which the classrooms and learning centres provided appropriate learning environment for the learners.

## 5.7 Quantitative data Processing, Interpretation and Analysis

### 5.7.1 Quantitative Data Processing and Analysis

The quantitative data collected involved coding and entry into SPSS software, and data cleaning through missing data treatment. Data were analysed using descriptive analyses Cross-tabulation helped in analysing the relationship between the variables because they were categorical in nature.

### 5.7.2 Qualitative data Processing and Analysis

The data collected were transcribed verbatim during and after data collection then translated in English. It is intended to be highly iterative allowing reflections as data is being collected. Through this process, emerging themes were identified and followed up while teams were still in the field to ensure that a particular issue is comprehensively studied and understood. Interviewers were trained in how to identify new information and make follow up during subsequent interviews. During daily briefings with teams, emerging issues were discussed with the teams to identify follow up issues. A code frame will then be developed and discussed between the team members. Themes were developed and using content analysis, data were analysed by identifying areas of convergence and divergence. This strengthened the interpretation and explanation of the quantitative results findings.

## 5.8 Data Quality Assurance

To ensure data quality control for the questionnaire, we focussed on attaining validity, reliability and trustworthiness. To establish validity, we conducted face validity by which the survey questionnaire was reviewed by the consultants and the World Vision. Face validity helped in ensuring the validity of a questionnaire, as it involved evaluating how the questions in the questionnaire were relevant, clear, and appropriate for the intended purpose at first glance. In the review process, the reviewers of the questionnaire assessed the clarity, simplicity, unambiguity, and comprehensiveness, ensuring that they accurately measured the variables they were intended to assess (Allen et al., 2023). Face validity was deemed sufficient because the School Based Test about Reading (STAR) tool was a World Vision standardized tool for assessing the Literacy (reading) skills. The World Vision STAR (School-based Test about Reading) provides critical information about children's foundational reading ability. It measures reading skills for Grade 3 students who are the focus of World Vision's Literacy programming (World Vision STAR Guidance [School-based Test about Reading], 2017). Tool validation guaranteed that the questionnaire measured what it intended to measure and provided accurate and meaningful data for the study.

To establish reliability of the questionnaire, inter-rater reliability by which consultants and the World Vision team rated appropriateness of the items in the questionnaire was carried out. Inter-rater reliability was used in this study to ensure the consistency and reliability of the data collected through the questionnaire. By involving different raters, the study aimed to ensure that the questions were consistently interpreted in the same way by all reviewers, thereby minimizing any bias or inconsistencies in the evaluation of the questionnaire items. The use of inter-rater reliability was essential because it provided a means of confirming that the rating process was objective and that the items in the questionnaire were appropriate for assessing the intended constructs. When multiple raters agree on the appropriateness of the questions, it strengthens the reliability of the questionnaire and enhances its ability to consistently measure what it is intended to measure. This method also helped identify any potential discrepancies in the questionnaire items, allowing the researchers to make necessary adjustments before administering the survey (Cole, 2024). Ultimately, inter-rater reliability contributed to improving the overall internal consistency of the questionnaire, ensuring that the questionnaire would produce reliable and consistent results

Trustworthiness was used to establish data quality control for the interview guide, through ensuring credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability. Credibility was ensured by guaranteeing that the project findings accurately represented the participants' original views and data, through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. Dependability was achieved by verifying that the findings, interpretations, and recommendations were supported by the data received from participants. Transferability was attained by enabling the findings to be applicable to other contexts, through thick description in presenting the findings. Conformability, which ensures that the data accurately represents the information from the project, was ascertained by using verbatim statements and ensuring that quotations were connected to all main concepts and widely representative (Adler, 2022). By implementing these measures, trustworthiness of data was ensured and maintained the highest standards of research quality.

## 5.9 Ethical Considerations

1. Survey protocols and tools were approved by World Vision Uganda and Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (UCUREC-2024-1026) and then clearance from UNCST (SS3379ES) before the data collection began. The consultant team adhered to ethical considerations including:
2. Respect and Dignity: The consultant shall respect the inherent dignity of the respondents and the views of all stakeholders and participants engaged during the assignment.
3. Informed consent and assent were sought from all respondents of the study. Assent was included because the study included minors, who were the pupils that responded to the STAR tool.
4. Confidentiality: All information provided by participants was held in confidence. Consultant/s protected the anonymity and confidentiality of all participants, and this communication was made available to respondents at the beginning to build the confidence of the participants.
5. In all, there was adhering to National Council for Science and Technology Guidelines for Research on Humans (2014).
6. Training of researchers on identification of distressful events among children.

## 5.10 Limitations, Risks and Mitigation Measures

We foresaw that while we would work with schools that had implemented the UL model for five years, there could be limitations surrounding the fidelity of Unlock Literacy (UL) model. To address these concerns, we conducted site visits and observations, reviewed school records and documents, surveyed or interview school administrators and teachers, and utilised implementation checklists or fidelity protocols to ensure consistency. By acknowledging these limitations and implementing these mitigation measures, increased confidence in our study's findings and provided a more accurate evaluation of the UL model's effectiveness.

## 6.0 CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS

### 6.1 Introduction

This section presents findings from quantitative and qualitative data, highlighting the successes, challenges, and recommendations for sustaining and expanding the program's impact. The data was presented using descriptive statistics and statements and inferential statistics, specifically Students'-test.

### 6.2 Key Findings

The study findings have been arranged according to impact, effectiveness, sustainability, lessons learnt, cross cutting issues and recommendations as guided by the evaluation framework. The sub headings cater for the objectives as proposed in the ToR.

#### 6.2.1 Impact

In measuring impact, the study looked for indicators that the UL model intervention as shown in Annex B improved reading results of children, especially the most vulnerable in target communities.

##### 6.2.1.1 Contribution of the Unlock Literacy Model to Increased Reading Results of Children

In terms of contribution of the Unlock literacy model to reading results, a total of 733 learners in P.3 in intervention schools and 553 in control schools were assessed and 695 children from P5 in intervention schools and 505 from control schools were assessed in UL programme areas during the evaluation. Their scores in the aspects follows as in table 2.

Table 2: Details of learner performance in different literacy aspects by gender

SN	Literacy Aspect	Readers by Gender				Gender by Gender			
		P3 Intervention		P3 Control		P5 Intervention		P5 control	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Lower case letter knowledge	97.8%	97.1%	88.7%	63.5%	99.0%	98.7%	93.8%	94.1%
2	Most used words	87.1%	86.8%	65.8%	66.5%	94.8%	94.6%	81.1%	82.8%
3	Decodable words	72.4%	73.0%	53.7%	56.1%	86.9%	84.8%	76.7%	74.2%
4	Reading Passage	68.3%	61.7%	55.2%	60.7%	86.4%	89.5%	60.8%	58.7%
5	Comprehension	48.1%	54.8%	26.6%	27.3%	62.1%	69.9%	62.9%	56.6%
6	Average Total	74.9%	74.7%	58.0%	54.8%	85.8%	87.5%	75.1%	73.3%

Table 2 shows that boys performed better in intervention schools in P3 (74.9%) and compared to boys in control schools (58.0%) indicating a 16.9% contribution of the model towards boys reading results. In the case of girls, those in intervention schools (74.7%) did better than those in control schools (54.8%) indicating a 19.9% contribution of the model towards reading results. Similarly, in the case of P5, boys in intervention schools (85.8%) did better than boys in control schools (75.1%) indicating a model contribution of 10.7% towards boys reading results. For the case of girls those in interventions schools performed better (87.5%) compared to those in control schools (73.3%), indicating a model contribution of 14.2% towards girls reading results. The above descriptive results were confirmed by the analysis of comparison as shown in Table 3

Table 3: Overall Mean Reading Test Difference between control and intervention schools

Reading Literacy	Class	Mean	Std.	t	p
	P3 Intervention	1.78	0.24	22.921	0.000
	P3 Control	1.45	0.26		
	P5 Intervention	1.59	0.26	17.922	0.000
	P5 Control	1.31	0.23		

The means in table 3 reveal that the mean for P3 in intervention schools (1.78) was slightly higher than that of control schools (mean = 1.45). Likewise, the P5 intervention schools had higher mean (1.59) compared to control schools (1.31). Comparing the two, we note that while a low mean difference of 0.33 between control and intervention groups for P3 and 0.38 for P5 in favour of intervention group existed, in both cases the difference was statistically significant ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). This suggested that the Unlock Literacy project had a significant impact on the reading results of pupils in primary schools.

The above results signify that the model is contributing significantly to reading of boys and girls. The study established the number of children enrolling and accessing literacy instruction as shown below:

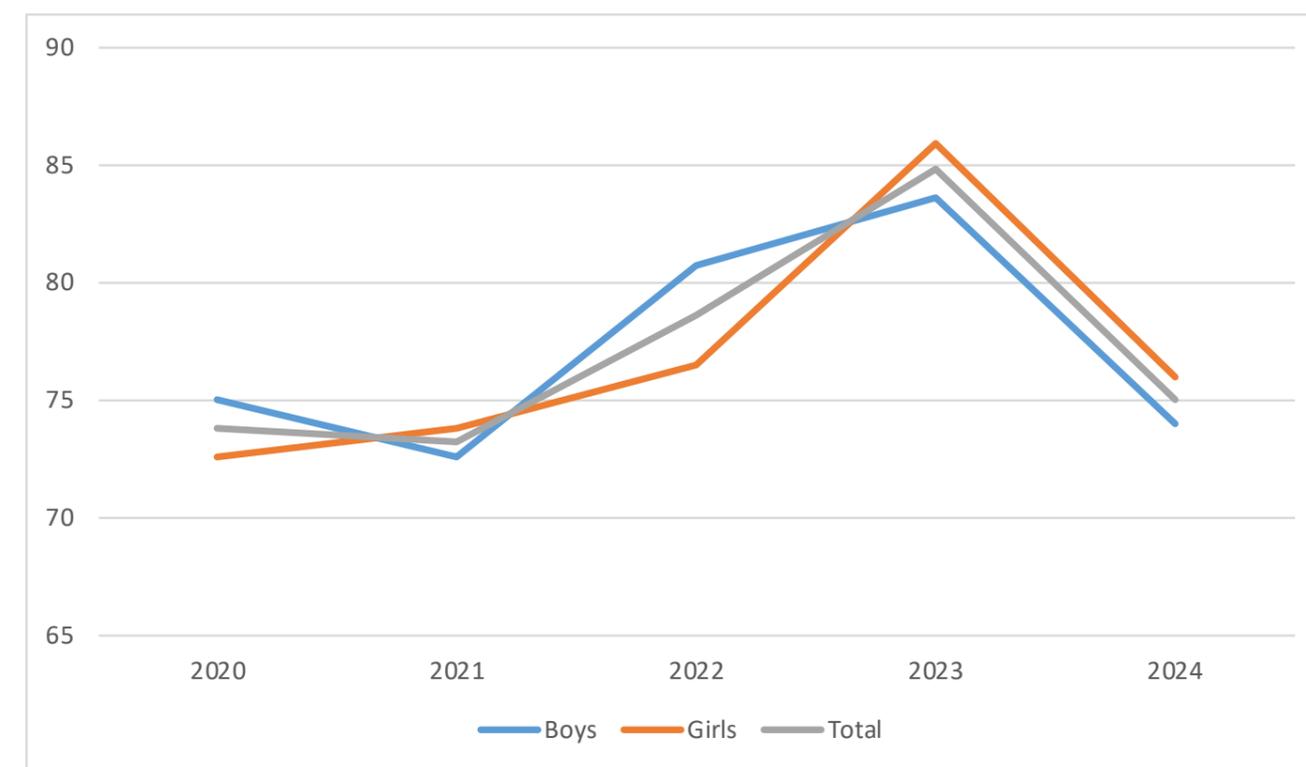


Figure 3: Children enrolling in Unlock Literacy Models supported schools

Figure 3 show a steady increase in enrolment of children in school to access literacy instructions in programme areas standing at 86%, with more girls progressively enrolling more than boys. This number is much higher compared to the 2024 national average of 75.2% of children enrolling in primary schools (UBOS, 2024). This implies that the UL model has activities that are sensitive to the needs of both boys and girls and probably favouring continued enrolment of girls in school.

### 6.3 Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the measure of how well a program achieves its intended outcomes and generates a positive impact on its target population or area (Brandt, 2016). In this case, we are assessing the extent to which the UL model intervention is improving reading results of children especially the most vulnerable children. To arrive at the effectiveness, different components of the model are evaluated as below.

#### 6.3.1 To what extent does the UL model increase reading results of children?

One of the parameters for effectiveness was the extent to which the model increases reading results of children in supported schools. Improved reading is strongly associated with improved performance in PLE. We established the performance of learners in different reading levels as part of the outcome indicators for the last four years and summarized the results as in table 4.

Table 4: Reading results outcome indicators in the programme areas in the last four years

SN	Outcome Indicators	2020	2022	2023	2024	% increase between baseline and 2024
1.	Proportion of children in grade 3 achieving at least a minimum level in reading	20.2	36.8	45.7	75.2	55.0
2.	Proportion of children in P6 that can read with comprehension	62.6			90.1	27.5
3.	Percentage of children who pass PLE	95.9	86.7	83.5	84.3	-11.6

Source: Primary data 2024; World Vision, 2020; World Vision, 2023

Table 4 shows a significant percentage (55%) increase in the proportion of grade 3 children achieving at least a minimum reading level compared to the P6 level of 27.5%. This implies that greater impact is felt at the P3 level compared to P5. This has implication for future investment that need to be directed to this level to gain greater and sustained benefits.

#### 6.3.2 How effective are the model interventions at strengthening teaching instruction in Grades 1-3?

The Unlock Literacy model seeks to equip teachers with pedagogical practices that strengthen teaching instructions. Strengthening teaching instructions so as to have quality of teaching can have a huge impact on the speed of student learning (Wiliam, 2006). However, in order to be more effective in strengthening quality of teaching instructions, we need to focus on quality which is a significant factor in student success (Koedel & Betts, 2007). Thus, in order to define teaching quality, it is important to consider the teacher's ability to create a positive learning environment, engaging instruction, and effective assessment of student learning (Tikrity, 2023). Dorfner, Förtsch and Neuhaus (2018) identified three key aspects of instructional quality: classroom management, supportive climate, and cognitive activation. Thus, if we are to strengthen teaching instructions, we need to focus on key parameters that include: clarity of instruction through a well thought out step by step approach, student engagement through hands on and involving class activities, and providing a supportive learning environment that is print rich that are considered essential teacher pedagogical practices (Koedel & Betts, 2007; Wiliam, 2006).

The UL model focused on teacher reading to children, asking questions, teachers making learners read with classmates, and doing quiet reading in the past week. It also focuses on teaching songs, games and letter sounds. These key pedagogical practices were assessed and results summarised as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Teacher pedagogical practices that promote literacy development

SN	Pedagogical Practices	Type of School		Difference
		Intervention	Control	
1.	Over the past week, did your teacher read to you?	92.6%	93.8%	-1.2
2.	Over the past week, did your teacher ask you questions about what you read?	88.0%	91.8%	-3.8
3.	Over the past week, did you read with a classmate in school	86.8%	73.6%	13.2
4.	Over the past week, did you read quietly all by yourself without help at school?	80.3%	55.1%	25.2
5.	Over the past week, did you learn songs or games in class?	78.3%	75.7%	2.6
6.	Over the past week, did your teacher teach you the sounds of letters and words?	87.3%	80.9%	6.4
<b>Average</b>		<b>85.55%</b>	<b>78.48%</b>	<b>7.07</b>

Table 5 shows that teachers in the intervention schools did well in four out of the six aspects of teacher pedagogical practices. We note that most children (86.8%) in intervention schools as compared to those in control schools (73.6%) were now reading with a classmate. A large proportion (80.3%) of children in interventions schools were also reading quietly by themselves as compared to those in control schools (55.1%). This result brings in a significant shift from teacher led literacy activities to learner led initiatives that is significant for literacy development in intervention schools. From the results we also note that control schools have more teachers reading for children (93.8%) and asking learners questions about what the teacher has read for them (91.8%) as compared to those in intervention schools, signifying dominant teacher led approach. To see if these differences between the control and intervention groups were statistically significant, a student t test was conducted and results summarised in table 6.

Table 6: Student-Test Results for Teacher Practices

Teacher Practices	School Type	Mean	Std.	t	p
Over the past week, did your teacher read to you?	Intervention school	2.85	0.52	3.065	0.002
	Control school	2.88	0.47		
Over the past week, did your teacher ask you questions about what you read?	Intervention school	2.77	0.64	13.256	0.000
	Control school	2.84	0.54		
Over the past week, did you read with a classmate in school?	Intervention school	2.74	0.67	3.932	0.000
	Control school	2.48	0.88		
Over the past week, did you read quietly all by yourself without help at school?	Intervention school	2.62	0.78	3.065	0.002
	Control school	2.11	0.99		
Over the past week, did you learn songs or games in class?	Intervention school	2.58	0.81	13.256	0.000
	Control school	2.52	0.85		
Over the past week, did your teacher teach you the sounds of letters and words?	Intervention school	2.75	0.65	3.932	0.000
	Control school	2.63	0.77		

Table 6 shows a significant difference in four out of the six practices. Teachers reading to learners and learners reading quietly by themselves showed a weaker statistical difference. Meaning that teachings in both control and intervention schools supported learners in the same way. However, for the case of teaching sounds, learning songs, and reading with classmates, learners in interventions schools were supported better than those in control schools. However, when it comes to asking learners questions, teachers in control schools did more than those in intervention schools. The likely explanation for this could be that teachers in the control schools rely much more on teacher centred pedagogy where they do more talking, while the intervention schools are doing more child centred approach that encourages peer learning with limited teacher interruptions.

Generally, the findings show that teachers have benefited from structured training and mentorship, equipping them with practical skills to improve reading instruction. One teacher remarked, "Unlock Literacy has helped me become a very good material creator. I have even been selected as a champion teacher in the district."

Another teachers also observed that: "The learners feel free in reading, and when you go to their classrooms, there is a lot of display of reading materials which encourages them to practice."

However, frequent teacher transfers mean that newly posted teachers may need additional training, which can slow progress. A district official noted, "The trained teachers are transferred, and when they bring new ones, we have to start training afresh, which is expensive." Despite this, teachers are passionate and willing to adapt, and continuous training programs are ensuring that knowledge is passed on.

When interviewed, a female teacher (FT3), at a primary school revealed; "The skills we emphasize under the Unlock Literacy project include letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension we learnt during training"

Another teacher acknowledged the training they received from World vision by revealing that:

World Vision has helped much. I could not even imagine how a P1, P2, P3 child can read because for me I reached even P7 when I did not know how to read a single sentence. For example, if you go and interview P1, P2, and P3, they are the best readers in schools because of the skills World Vision has given to us. When parents with children in private schools see children in World Vision supported schools able to take bible readings in church, they transfer their children from private schools.

In conclusion, the UL model has been effective in strengthening teacher instructional practices in the intervention schools as noted from what children were able to do as different from those in the control schools. Also, observing the teacher outcomes shows a general improvement in all the three areas above 70%. The improved teacher practices arising from the UL Model training will be a strong pillar for consistent learner literacy development as they start to love school, hardly absent themselves and practice reading on their own.

### 6.3.3 To what extent does the model enhance support by communities for children's reading?

Involvement of parents and community members has an important, positive impact on a child's success in development of reading skills (Terstilsky & Wilkins, 2015). Studies show that supportive communities have a positive role in promoting children literacy development as community member help parents who may have difficulties in assisting their children to read (Adhimas et al., 2019). Thus, the collaborative working of schools, parents and communities acts as a social leveller and a mechanism for inclusion (Jeynes, 2018), breaking down barriers and social divides (French et al., 2022).

There are different approaches to engagement with communities. For example, Blythe et al. (2013) established five principles of community engagement: strengths-based, empowerment, role modelling, communication, and measurement and feedback. Based on all these approaches, what is most used to support children's literacy development include: reading clubs, literacy drives, awareness campaigns, as well as encouraging families and community members to volunteer as tutors and reading partners. UL Model focuses on reading clubs, volunteer tutors and awareness campaigns, but is not yet involved in literacy drives and reading partners. In this evaluation we focused on the reading clubs that had become more popular by establishing if children were making use of them. We compared performance of those participating in reading clubs in experiment schools versus those who do not participate as in the control schools as shown in table 7.

Table 7: After-School Reading Activity Participation and reading results

		Reading Literacy	Do you attend after-school reading activities, like Reading Clubs?	If yes, did you attend last week?
	Reading Literacy	1.000		
Spearman's rho	Do you attend after-school reading activities, like Reading Clubs?	0.243**	0.243**	
	If yes, did you attend last week?	0.000	.	
	If yes, did you attend last week?	0.219**	.741**	1.000
		0.002	.000	.

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 shows a statistically significant but weak positive relationship between learners' participation in after-school reading activities and their reading literacy outcomes. A weak positive correlation ( $\rho = 0.243$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was observed between attending reading clubs and reading literacy, indicating that learners who participate in these activities tend to perform slightly better in reading. Similarly, a weak positive correlation ( $\rho = 0.219$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was found between reading literacy and attendance at reading activities in the past week, suggesting that recent participation is modestly associated with improved literacy skills. Additionally, there was a strong positive correlation ( $\rho = 0.741$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between general attendance and recent attendance, indicating consistency in learners' engagement with these programs. These findings suggest that while the association is not strong, regular participation in community reading activities may contribute positively to literacy development

In terms of result assessment, in this area, the UL Model is banking on one outcome, that is: proportion of reading camps achieving quality standards as outlined in the programme guidance. To test this outcome, the programme uses four items that include: quality of the facilitation, sessions following curriculum structure, sufficient child attendance & print rich environment. Observation results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Reading Clubs Quality standards

SN	Outcome Indicators	Intervention	Control
1	Quality of the facilitation	88.9	N/A
2	Sessions following curriculum structure	100	N/A
3	Print rich environment	77.8	N/A
4	Proportion of children attending reading clubs	35.0	4.8
<b>Average</b>		<b>75.4</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Table 8 shows that all sessions being conducted in the reading camps followed the approved curriculum structure and quality facilitation was being conducted in 88.9% of the camps. The reading camps environments was rated at 77.8% which is still a good rating compared to what is happening in control schools. However, the proportion of children attending the reading clubs was low. This brings the overall rating to 75.4%. One of the key explanations for the low numbers of learners accessing the reading centres was attributed to the fact that some centres were no longer operating.

Community members interviewed acknowledge that UL Model is building a community of parents who are now keen to develop culturally relevant learning materials, such as stories, riddles, and poems in local languages to support Literacy development among their children. A staff member from district Z noted, "Parents and the community language board developed and printed readers in local languages, enriching the children's learning experiences." This effort ensures that learning content resonates with children's cultural context.

In conclusion, the UL Model has to a larger extent enhanced support by community for children's reading. This is seen through the increasing number of community reading centres being established, the volunteers who support community reading camps that work as literacy centres and the number of children being allowed to participate in those centres. These gestures show support for learning as more opportunities are provided for children both in and out of school to develop their literacy skills at their convenient times as shown in table 9.

Table 9: Outcome indicators for community support for children's reading

SN	Outcome Indicators	2020	2022	2023	2024
1	% of community literacy centres established				135.6
2	% of community volunteers trained to support community literacy centres				28.2
3	% of children attending community literacy centres regularly	58.6	19.2	26.3	35.0
4	% community literacy centres achieving quality standards	27.6	22.1	24.8	75.4

Source: Primary data 2024; World Vision, 2020; World Vision, 2023

Table 9 shows that outcome indicators for community support for children's reading is increasing steadily from 27.6% at baseline in 2020 to 75.4% in 2024. The study notes that while there is steady progress in established centres achieving quality standards, the proportion of community volunteers (28.2%) and the proportion of children (35.0%) coming to the centres is still below the expected baseline projections (58.6%). The implication for this is that more centres have been established without corresponding proportion of trained volunteers to manage them to ensure quality standards. When we look at it in a positive angle, we note that more centres were opened by parents as part of scaling, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown period to provide space for continued learning. During this evaluation, it was reported that the community reading camps, managed by volunteers and local leaders, had also become essential spaces for not only literacy development, but also for other community activities. A community leader shared, "During public gatherings like funerals and religious meetings, I talk to parents about the importance of literacy. The leaders in these places are now engaged."

The community reading camp sites having dual roles means that more needs to be done by implementing partners to ensure they are sustained as work in progress. While more parents are volunteering to support this initiative, there are also some who still need more education. One community leader pointed out, "Some parents are not committed to sending their children to the learning centre and instead keep them at home for chores." By increasing awareness and demonstrating the value of reading, more families are beginning to see the long-term benefits.

Another community leader at reading camp revealed;

*"Truly, Unlock Literacy is a real gift. It has taught our children how to read and write in their local language. It has also given me knowledge and the children under the learning centre have learnt to love their parents, fellow children and school."*

Another male parent (MP1) revealed; "The project has helped to remind the parents their responsibility in the education of their children."

While the reading clubs in the communities extend learning beyond school to promote further Literacy development and are associated with improved reading literacy, a large proportion (65%) of all the learners were not taking advantage of this support. This needed further interrogation. In interviews with some participants, a female parent (FP5) revealed; "The community reading Literacy centre was established during COVID-19 period but after the re-opening of the country, the reading centre closed. It has not worked again since COVID-19."

Relatedly, another female parent (FP6) revealed;

*We used to have a learning centre that stopped working. After the idea had been sold to us by World Vision, the community liked the project, selected a place and started to send the children there for learning. While the learners continued go to the learning centre, teachers stopped coming. The teachers were complaining of lack of pay. Me as a BBC, I still keep the books although some of them have been destroyed by rats because of not being used.*

Further, female parent at one Primary School (FP6) revealed;

*The learning centre had proved valuable before it was abandoned following the country's reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic because people resumed their normal routines, including the RCTs, and also due to decline in follow-up by World Vision officers, community engagement with the centre declined significantly. However, the children loved going to the centre to study and most children had learnt how to read and write in their mother language. The centre had helped to make the children like school. For instance, my child who was young would sometimes refuse to go to school, but after attending classes at the learning centre, he started to go school willingly. As parents we desire that the project should continue and I have been planning to go to the World Vision Office to ask what can be done to revive our learning centre.*

The responses above suggest that in some areas, the reading clubs were not working effectively because RCTs abandoned the community learning centres and also due to decline in follow-up by stakeholders. While the structures and everything needed to implement the Literacy reading clubs were in place, since COVID-19 the reopening of schools, they clubs have not worked.

Considering the above discourse, further discussions need to be held to revive reading camps that are not being used. World Vision, together with other stakeholders may need to provide some more direction and quality standards training in future for communities and reading camp model adoptees for sustainable adoption by communities. For example, employing specific persons to manage the reading centres, further training of volunteers and including a stipend for them to keep them around could be adopted.

### 6.3.4 Does the model increase support by parents for children's reading?

One of the important tenets of Unlock Literacy is promoting parental, guardian and community support for children to develop their literacy skills. In this evaluation, as a way of establishing the magnitude of support parents give children to promote their readings skills development, we set out to establish the proportion of children (boys, girls) who report household members engaging in at least 2 literacy activities with them in the past 1 week as a critical aspect of parents support for learning.

Research shows that the earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more profound the results and the longer lasting the effects (Mullis et al., 2004). This can be done when parents support their children's literacy development activities at home and community to promote reading initiatives (Cabell et al., 2019). Several studies have emerged that focus on using different measures for assessing the quality of HLE (Bonifacci et al., 2021). For example, Rodriguez and Tamis-LeMonda (2011) used a measure for all aspects of the HLE, and found strong associations between the HLE and children's skills in receptive vocabulary and emergent literacy. Important aspects of quality HLE include: indoor (e.g., learning letters or numbers, doing crafts) and

outdoor (e.g., visiting a library, doing sports) learning stimulation (Foster et al., 2005). The second critical component is the positive parent-child relationship, especially warm and supportive interactions (Ainsworth et al., 2015) that is associated with beneficial developmental outcomes (Bradley & Corwyn, 2005). The third emerging component is the digital activities parents engage with their children (Sonnenschein et al., 2021).

In the case for the Unlock Literacy model, support for children's reading is expected in the areas of reading at home with them, telling a child stories and helping children do their homework that can be classified as indoor component. However, under this component, UL misses painting and drawing, playing with letters and numbers and singing songs and rhymes. Taking a child to community library or reading camp, and supporting a child to play with other children belong to the outdoor component. However, under this component UL misses provision of Literacy spaces in homes. The other missing components in the UL model is the digital learning activities, warmth activities, inconsistent discipline and conflict measures that are found to be part of parental support areas in children's literacy development. The UL model however, has other important aspects that are not usually emphasised in other models. These include: Making local Literacy materials, parental participation on schools' activities like meetings and supporting community Literacy hubs.

Working with the areas of parental engagement component to support children's literacy development under the UL model, specific measurement areas are shown in figure 4.

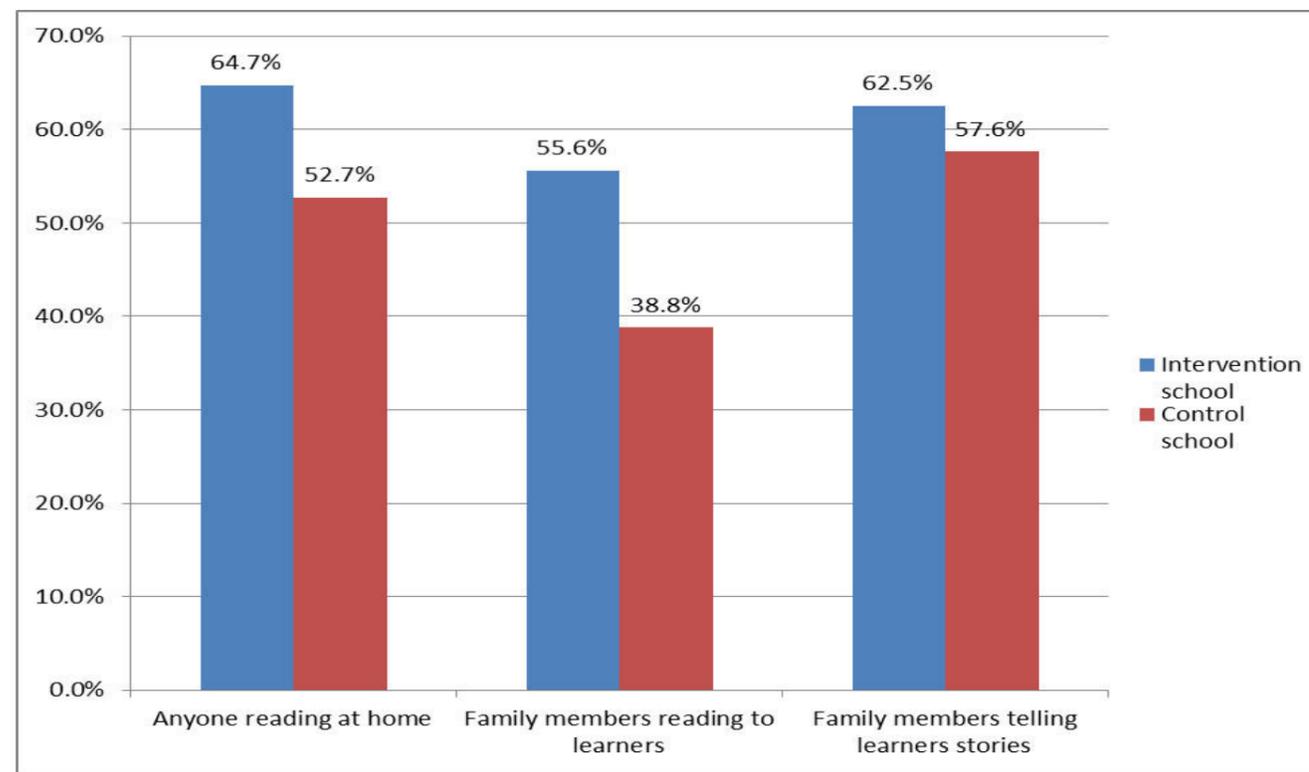


Figure 4: Family members supporting Reading at Home

The results in Figure 7 show that pupils in intervention schools reported higher average percentage (60.9%) of seeing family members supporting reading at home compared to pupils in control schools (49.7%). Specifically, 64.7% of pupils in intervention schools had observed someone in their home reading, compared to 52.7% in control schools. This pattern continued for other activities with 64.7% of pupils in intervention schools reporting family members reading to them, and 55.6% in intervention schools reported hearing stories being told, compared to just 38.8% in control schools. These results suggest that the Unlock Literacy model successfully encouraged family involvement in their children's reading, potentially contributing to the improvement of children's literacy skills as compared to non-intervention areas. We tested the association between the above parameters and children's reading results as shown in table 10.

Table 10: Correlation of Reading at Home and Reading Literacy

	1	2	3	4	5	
Spearman's rho	1	1.000				
	2	0.221**	1.000			
	3	0.202**	0.422**	1.000		
	4	0.228**	0.441**	0.523**	1.000	
	5	0.149**	0.317**	0.364**	0.385**	1.000

. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Key:

1= Reading Literacy

2 = Over the past week, have you seen anyone in your home reading?

3= Over the past week, have you seen anyone in your home reading?

4= Over the past week, has a family member read to you?

5= Over the past week, has a family member told you a story?



The Spearman's rho correlation results reveal a series of weak but statistically significant positive relationships between various forms of reading engagement at home and children's reading literacy. Specifically, reading literacy is weakly correlated with having seen someone reading at home ( $r = 0.221$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), having a family member read to the child ( $r = 0.228$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and being told a story by a family member ( $r = 0.149$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings suggest that children who are exposed to reading behaviors at home whether through observation or direct interaction tend to exhibit slightly higher reading literacy outcomes. Further, moderate correlations are observed among the home literacy practices themselves. For instance, the relationship between being read to by a family member and seeing someone reading at home is moderate ( $r = 0.441$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), as is the correlation between being read to and hearing a story ( $r = 0.385$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Overall, while the associations with reading literacy are not strong, the consistent significance suggests that home literacy environments play a supportive role in developing children's reading abilities.

With respect to the aspect of parents/guardians providing reading materials to learners, the pupils were asked to tell if at home they had textbooks, religious, magazines, newspapers, story books, colouring books, and cartoon/ comic books. The results on the same follow in Table 11.

Table 11: Parents or Guardians Providing Reading Materials

		School Type		Average Total
		Intervention school	Control school	
Parents/ guardians providing reading materials to their children at home	Yes	502 34.9%	170 19.3%	336 27.1%
	No	934 65.1%	709 80.7%	821 72.9%

Table 11 shows that more parents (34.9%) provided reading materials for their children in the intervention schools than in the control schools (19.3%). However, larger proportion of parents in both intervention (65.1%) and control schools (80.7%) are not providing any materials for their children to support development of reading. This large proportions depicts a worrying pattern of limited support for children at home in terms of literacy rich environments that is key for their development. While the proportion of parents providing reading materials in intervention schools is larger than that of control school, a difference of 15.6% in provision between the two groups is still not very significant considering the amount of effort being placed on parent education in intervention areas. We note that other factors like poverty, could be at play here, suggesting multifaceted approach to support parent provision of those materials, which could be hampered by their income levels.

The details of the specific literacy materials being provided by parents to their children at home is shown in table 12.

Table 12: Specific Literacy materials provided by parents for their children at home

		School Type		Total
		Intervention school	Control school	
Have Textbooks at Home	Yes	811 56.5%	225 25.6%	1036 44.8%
	No	625 43.5%	654 74.4%	1279 55.2%
Religious Books	Yes	868 60.4%	380 43.2%	1248 53.9%
	No	568 39.6%	499 56.8%	1067 46.1%

Magazines	Yes	235 16.4%	61 6.9%	296 12.8%
	No	1201 83.6%	818 93.1%	2019 87.2%
Newspapers	Yes	411 28.6%	231 26.3%	642 27.7%
	No	1025 71.4%	648 73.7%	1673 72.3%
Story Books	Yes	662 77.4%	157 72.2%	819 1496
	No	1201 53.9%	818 82.1%	2019 64.6%
Colouring Books	Yes	260 18.1%	80 9.1%	340 14.7%
	No	1176 81.9%	799 90.9%	1975 85.3%
Cartoon/ Comics books	Yes	266 18.5%	54 6.1%	320 13.8%
	No	1170 81.5%	825 93.9%	1995 86.2%

The results in Table 12 indicate that most parents in intervention schools (60%) were providing religious books (bible) followed by text books (56.5%) to their children as a material to develop their literacy skills, while the least provided material was magazines (16.4%), colouring books (18.1%) and cartoon/ comics books (18.5%). We note that while religious books and text books being provided also promote literacy development, in terms of sustaining children's interest in reading, the most child friendly resources ought to be comics, colouring books and readers. This calls for further sensitisation of parents on what literacy material are most appropriate for children's literacy development by implementing partners. A correlation between provision of the materials and reading results was worked out as shown in table 13.

Table 13: Correlation between children's reading results and provision of literacy materials

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Spearman's rho 1	1.000							
2	0.308** 0.000	1.000						
3	0.171** 0.000	0.279** 0.000	1.000					
4	0.093** 0.000	0.248** 0.000	0.204** 0.000	1.000				
5	0.074** 0.000	0.242** 0.000	0.227** 0.000	0.310** 0.000	1.000			
6	0.249** 0.000	0.365** 0.000	0.250** 0.000	0.201** 0.000	0.296** 0.000	1.000		
7	0.081** 0.000	0.210** 0.000	0.220** 0.000	0.255** 0.000	0.284** 0.000	0.293** 0.000	1.000	
8	0.114** 0.000	0.210** 0.000	0.166** 0.000	0.291** 0.000	0.274** 0.000	0.309** 0.000	0.375** 0.000	1.000

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Key

- 1= Reading Literacy
- 2= Have Textbooks at Home
- 3= Religious Books
- 4 = Magazines
- 5 = Newspapers
- 6 = Story Books
- 7 = Colouring Books
- 8 = Cartoon/ Comics books

The correlation results reveal several statistically significant but generally weak relationships between reading literacy and the presence of various reading materials at home. All correlations are significant at the 0.05 level, based on Spearman's rho, indicating that the associations are unlikely to have occurred by chance. Among all the variables, the strongest correlation with reading literacy is found with having textbooks at home ( $r = 0.308$ ), suggesting that children who have textbooks tend to demonstrate better reading literacy. Access to storybooks ( $r = 0.249$ ) also shows a relatively stronger association, underlining the importance of age-appropriate narrative material in supporting literacy development. Other reading materials, such as religious books ( $r = 0.171$ ), cartoons/comics ( $r = 0.114$ ), magazines ( $r = 0.093$ ), colouring books ( $r = 0.081$ ), and newspapers ( $r = 0.074$ ), are positively but weakly associated with reading literacy. These correlations, while small, still suggest that a print-rich environment at home, even if informal or recreational in nature, is beneficial for literacy outcomes. Furthermore, significant inter correlations among the types of materials (e.g., storybooks with textbooks,  $r = 0.365$ ; cartoons with colouring books,  $r = 0.375$ ) highlight the likelihood that families who provide one type of material are also likely to provide others, contributing to a broader literacy environment. In sum, while the effect sizes are generally weak, the consistent positive associations affirm that access to diverse reading materials at home plays a supportive role in enhancing children's reading literacy. Among them, textbooks and storybooks appear particularly influential.

Besides the reading materials being provided at home, the UL model also focused on parent education on creation of reading spaces and utilisation of community reading camps. Qualitative data collected show that more parents are becoming more involved in their children's learning, with some even participating in reading sessions themselves. A teacher shared:

*"Even parents come to learn because the language was revisited. Some parents attend the sessions because they want to learn new developments in the local language."*

Similarly, a male parent (MP3) in Bundibugyo revealed;

*We were also taught to form reading corners in our houses. I created a reading corner in my house where I hang materials my daughter made like radios and plates made using local resources. I also hang there some diagrams I get from newspapers such as new vision and other interesting materials that help my daughter to learn.*

Another male parent (MP2) who volunteers in a reading centre revealed;  
*"When the parents come to borrow books, I provide them to them and even those who want to buy books for children I help them."*

Another female parents, (FP2) revealed;

*"What I see is that children have learnt how to read and write, and they have been provided reading materials by World Vision including paints, pens, pencils and books. These have enabled our children to learn how to read and write."*

Parents from intervention schools are noticing difference in performance of their children in literacy as one male parent (MP1) revealed;

*Unlock Literacy is project which has revolutionised learning in the area. The children have interest in learning and parents have awakened hence give learning support to their learners. Issues that hampered learning such as absenteeism, dropout, and loitering are no more because the learners are always engaged in learning at the learning clubs when not at school. Most importantly, the children canably read and write in their language.*

Further, a male parent (MP2) revealed;

*The children have changed a lot because their attitude towards school has improved. The children look forward to going to school each day, they do not want to miss. The children also like reading and practice reading a lot while at home. The mind-set of the children towards learning has changed a lot.*

Relatedly, another female parent (FP4) revealed; *"Before, my child did not know Runyoro, but now can read it and write it. The project has helped my child to know his mother tongue very well."*

Another parent shared, *"Children are able to read, they have interest to go and attend. When children are performing well, it minimizes school dropouts"*.

The model has been influential to a great extent in promoting male engagement in learning of Literacy. This engagement is breaking traditional norms about fathers being less active around children. In this study, more men (59.3%) as compared to female (40.7%) were more available for Literacy issues with their children, as compared to 42% of parents in control groups are engaged in their children's learning (Kahunzire, Asiimwe & Kiyingi, 2023). This increased engagement marks a positive shift from the previous maternal dominance in educational roles. This change strengthens the family's role in supporting Literacy development.

Parents have greatly supported the establishment and management of community-based reading centers and volunteer to keep them operational for their children. These centers serve as hubs for fostering Literacy and are built through collaborative efforts between World Vision and local communities. As one parent explained, *"As parents, we provided poles for erecting the structure and thatched it, while World Vision provided us with roofing materials"* Similarly, a community leader from Camp C noted, *"The community contributed local materials, and World Vision supported us with iron sheets and tarpaulin."* The management of these centers is a testament to community ownership. Parents, alongside local leaders and volunteers, form committees that oversee the day-to-day running of the centers. These committees ensure the centers are operational, mobilize other parents, and monitor teaching activities. A male parent at Camp B elaborated, *"The committee monitors teaching and learning at the center and ensures that parents send children to the club to study."* Such structured systems reinforce support for Literacy development in communities sustainably.

Parents have also after World Vision trainings adopted the practice of supervising and assessing Literacy activities and sessions in which their children are participants. This is key in getting accountability for both learners and teachers when they know that there is a close person watching. A district education officer from district B observed, *"Parents were taught to supervise and assess learners and even support them in doing their homework."* This shift underscores the growing bond between parents and their children's learning activities.

Through the model, parents have learnt to contribute materials and Literacy resources for their children. This is contributing to making more environments rich and conducive for Literacy development more than before. For instance, in village K, parents collaborate with teachers to create teaching aids using locally available resources such as bottle tops and papyrus mats. A teacher from N Primary School noted, *"We make the materials together with the parents, ensuring everyone is involved in the process."* At home, some parents have even created dedicated reading corners. One parent shared, *"I have a reading corner where I hang materials my daughter made, like radios and plates crafted using local resources."*

Some parents and community members are also supporting Literacy development in their areas by becoming volunteer service providers after being trained by World Vision. Some serve as Reading Club Facilitators (RCFs),

while others act as Book Bank Custodians (BBCs). For example, a male parent from Camp B stated, *“I am a BBC, and I keep the materials, lend books to parents, and help them acquire additional resources for their children.”*

### 6.3.5 How effective is the model at enhancing support by education authorities for children's learning?

Unlock Literacy model contributes to increased support by education authorities that include District Education Officers (DEOs), District Inspector of Schools and officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports for children's reading in the following ways. However, World Vision uses one parameter as a way of measuring education authority's support for children's learning. This parameter is the proportion of schools receiving at least 3 supervision visits per school year by a local education authority. This parameter is limited as compared to other programmes elsewhere that have up to 7 parameters. For example, the Literacy Alive Programme in Belize used seven ways to engage government in literacy programme. These ways include: building relationships, sharing proven programmes, involving local government in programme adaptation, linking programme to national goals, measuring and evaluating programme progress, and keeping constant communication (Paradis, 2024).

In Uganda, every school is supposed to be inspected two times per term (MoES, 2017), however, only 35% of primary schools were visited in 2024 (Nangozi, 2025). The low frequency of inspection and number of schools inspected is partly due to shortage of manpower and resource constraints as one inspector oversees 148 schools (Samilu, 2024). In the case of World Vision supported schools, all schools were being supported every term, while only 35% of the control schools, just like other schools are inspected once a term. The education officials have been keener to inspect the Unlock literacy model schools because of the support they get from the model and capacity building training provided as explained below:

#### Training

Unlock Literacy Model has done a number of trainings for the education authorities at local and national levels to enhance they skills to support the model as one officer intimated:

*My role, in this Unlock Literacy project is that I have been a trained trainer. We train children and the teachers. We train teachers how to teach the children and do mentoring and dialogue with them and provide support supervision. We meet learners and talk to them about their learning and even talk to parents about supporting their children's education. For the children, at times, we also carry out assessment to establish the effectiveness of the project in enhancing learning Literacy.... (The education officer Hoima District)*

Another District Education Officer revealed that the training they got from the model has helped them become trainers of trainers on materials development for Literacy as explained below:

*I am a ToT trained in the Unlock Literacy project. I am engaged in training at regional level as a Master Trainer. I train teachers on the ground basically with a focus on the five core skills making sure that teachers can deliver well under this component, phonemic awareness such that they teach sound correctly, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension. I also train teachers in developing a rich print environment to enable effective teaching and even to enable learning when the teacher is not in class in what we call incidental learning... (The education officer Kikuube District)*

#### Mentorship

Another key contribution of the model to the education system is the strengthening of the mentorship aspect that was becoming extinct in some of the communities. Previously, most education officers went to schools to get find fault and enrolment data. However, the Unlock Literacy model is instilling the need for teacher mentorship that can be cascaded to the learners. One education official from Bundibugyo reported being an active member who supports mentorship by handling teachers slowly, allowing them to practice each individual skill in the classroom between training sessions and to reflect on their successes and challenges together. The authority revealed that

*I now just mentor teachers. During the training, teachers observe, discuss and practice techniques for building children's letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension in monthly reflective training sessions. In each session, trainers work with teachers in the same grade as their own and from neighboring schools to devise lesson plans for use in their classrooms; they also follow up on the implementation of lesson plans developed during the previous session.... (The education officer Bundibugyo District)*

#### Increased accountability for learning

The model is committing the Education authorities to provide increased accountability through supervision, monitoring and inspection of education activities. Such accountability activities enhance the implementation of the Unlock Literacy project. Education authorities interviewed reported different experiences. For example, one District Education Officer reported that:

*I am the focal person of World Vision programmes in the department of education in the district. I am responsible for ensuring that the schools are effectively implementing the Unlock Literacy project. We provide support supervision to the schools to ensure that the project is effectively implemented by the schools for accountability.... (The education officer Bundibugyo District).*

In support of the accountability role, a World Vision field officer also explained that the model tasks different stakeholders to their part to promote it in their areas of jurisdiction as seen from the following excerpt:

*My role as an education officer is see that all education matters are smoothly implemented. Therefore, I supervise, monitor and inspect all programs for proper success. Reading is a great challenge in our schools. Thus, seeing World Vision with the Unlock Literacy project, we cannot sit-back and wait. Our role is to see that the project is successfully implemented. Hence, I monitor everything regarding the project.... (The education officer Kikuube District)*

#### Provision of materials

Unlock Literacy Model contributes to increased support in the provision of reading materials by education authorities for children's reading. Schools are supported with reading materials, teacher training and boosted school management and leadership to support Literacy activities. Reading clubs established at community level to support Literacy and numeracy education. These materials are what the education officials have been failing to provide to the schools to enhance Literacy development.

#### Improved learning standards

The model introduced assessment tools, supported periodic school support supervision by district officials, laid emphasis on a robust literacy development pedagogy and engaged communities in learning. This combination of strategies has helped to promote standards in schools in terms of effective teacher preparation, teacher presence at school, learner assessment and general class organisation.

In conclusion, the UL model has contributed a lot in propping the education authorities to support learning in the interventions schools beyond just visits. However, logistical constraints sometimes limit their ability to provide regular support. A district official explained, *“We find ourselves visiting the centres only once a term due to limited transport and facilitation, but we continue to find creative ways to support teachers remotely.”*

### 6.4 Sustainability

The Unlock Literacy Model has had significant contribution in programme areas as compared to control sites in promoting an environment that is supportive of literacy development among learners. Its community wide approach has been key in enhancing sustainability tendencies that will have long lasting impact as it contributes to strengthened local and community education systems as explained below:

#### 6.4.1 What has worked well to promote the sustainability of outcomes

**Ownership:** The model is being implemented as a pedagogy within an existing government aided school. So, owners of schools see the initiative as support to them and are open for uptake as they see it as a way of making their schools do better. After being empowered, most school leaders have owned the model by doing closer teacher supervision, while the teachers are being more careful as they implement the model with fidelity.

**Facilities and materials provided:** The project has supported building of some facilities and equipping schools with literacy materials. Although the books may suffer from tear and wear, those schools will remain using those materials for some time even in the absence of continued support from WV.

**Teacher capacity building:** Many teachers were struggling to teach literacy in schools due to their unpreparedness and limited competence to do it. Some teachers acknowledge that they did not get enough preparation at college level to undertake the literacy instruction as needed in the field. The model thus, become an opportunity for them to re-learn and own the skills. They vow to continue with the gained skills to prepare children even in the absence of support from WV.

**Community empowerment:** The idea of opening and stocking community reading camps has invigorated the need to uphold literacy in programme areas. Volunteers including those who do not know how to read have got a purpose in the camps either as support facilitators or learners. Since it is locally managed, communities that see its benefits will keep it alive even in the absence of WV.

**Local materials creation:** Parents and community members have been encouraged to make local play materials for children. This has created a positive attitude towards play and expenditure on play materials that supports play-based pedagogy for children in the early years. If this momentum is maintained, sustained supply of literacy materials will be achieved.

#### 6.4.2 What is not working well for the model and why

There are still some concerns that need to be addressed to allow the model to work well. Some of those concerns include:

**Attitude of some support officials:** Some of the district officials felt the need to bring ready materials for reading as opposed to buying was better. This is particularly crucial if such persons are the ones in charge of training teachers to be creative. One district official elaborated, *"There is a need to purchase materials like stationery and sometimes hire people to help write charts. Some teachers are not good writers, so assistance is necessary to ensure quality materials."*

**Community Dependency Syndrome:** The poverty situation in some of the areas made some parents believe that Unlock Literacy would be another source of income, rather than supporting learning of their children. Most of them expected donations and hand-outs, which did not come. This made some reluctant to play their part as expected and instead portray being needy to get extra support. This mind-set was expressed by a parent who said, *"If it is possible, World Vision should supply us with building materials and enable us to purchase land rather than depending on the mercy of good Samaritans."*

**Teacher competence in Literacy methodology:** there are still many teachers who struggle to even sound letters. When it comes to phonic instructions, some learners are even better than their teachers. Such teachers, often with limited support just struggle with phonics instruction due to inadequate training, particularly in regions with diverse languages. A teacher admitted, *"Sometimes I fail to pronounce certain sounds correctly and cannot teach the children to pronounce them properly."*

**Resistance to Local language use:** Resistance to local language instruction presented a unique cultural challenge. Many parents and some teachers perceived teaching in local languages as less valuable than English-based instruction. One district official explained, *"Parents compare this model to private schools teaching in English and feel it is less beneficial."*

**Insufficient Facilitation for Monitoring and Support:** One of the main logistical challenges faced by district officials was the lack of sufficient resources for monitoring and supporting schools. Due to limited transport and facilitation, officials struggled to regularly visit Literacy centres and provide the necessary support. As one official shared, *"We need transport and facilitation for monitoring, but we find ourselves visiting the centres only once a term."* This limited engagement hindered their ability to assess the effectiveness of the program and address any emerging issues in a timely manner.

**Support for Community facilitators:** Some community facilitators, being volunteers, need additional motivation. A parent shared, *"Facilitators work hard, but since they are not paid, they leave for other opportunities. We are discussing how we can support them better."*

**Literacy centres structures:** Literacy centres require more permanent structures, as noted by a community leader: *"When it rains, learning stops because our camp is grass-thatched. If we had better structures, learning would continue regardless of the weather."*

**Teacher retention:** Teacher retention remains a concern, as trained ones are transferred and replaced by non-trained teacher. This make implementation a challenge as fidelity is compromised and requires training once again amidst constrained resources. The local education officers are however, exploring ways to retain trained teachers within program areas.



#### **.4.3 Project Model benefits and outcomes that will continue even without assistance from WV**

There are a number of outcomes and benefits that will continue to accrue in the programme areas even without assistance from World Vision. Some of these include:

Reading camps initiated with World Vision support will most likely remain in the communities that have taken up the initiative sustainably. This is particularly true for communities that have developed mechanism that support volunteer facilitators to work with children and adults in those centres. As new community leaders come in to support children and families to make use of the reading camps, their use will remain evident even after closure of the programme.

In some communities, parents with support from project officers and community leaders have been able to set up their own home libraries for use by their children. These libraries have taken an initial cost to set them up and will remain in those homes long after the Unlock Literacy Model period ends.

Teachers trained in implementation of the Unlock Literacy development model have had a life changing experience and skills that no one can take away from them. With support, teachers in the programmes schools or even away from it will always apply those skills to ensure that the children they work with develop better literacy skills even when the Unlock Literacy model programme is not in their area.

Relationship built between the schools and parents in which parents are taking more interest in what is happening in the schools and supporting development of literacy materials for their learners is a great way of making communities to own the schools. If such goodwill from parents is maintained, they will keep supporting the schools to promote better learning outcomes of their children even if the World Vision is no longer in their area. The quality standards being enforced in the schools as a result of education officials visiting the schools on a regular basis has in itself the potential to make the schools become more receptive to inspection and monitoring. In this case, the teachers in those schools will be more willing to make changes to improve quality standards in the schools. If this momentum is maintained, such schools will continue striving for excellence for a longer time beyond the life span of the UL model programme.

While the UL model was being implemented in the programme area, there was emphasis on gender equity and social inclusion in the way learning materials were made and displayed to cater for all learners, teacher pedagogy to cater for all children and opportunities provided for learning both at home and school which emphasised equity. This approach has become a standard practice both at home and school and will likely continue even when the programme ends.

#### **6.4.4 How the model contributes to strengthened local education systems**

Implementing the model in the programme areas has contributed to strengthened local education systems as follows:

Scaling intervention best practices: Implementation of the model has strengthened local education by improving teaching methods and increasing parental involvement. Schools have also incorporated best practices from the model into their regular teaching routines. A district official highlighted, "This model is helping teachers to be more practical in their classrooms. The children now have materials to engage with, and learning has improved." Partnerships: The project has MoUs with district leaders who are their partners in promoting quality learning for boys and girls in government aided schools. Within the communities, setting up reading camps was only possible as a result of partnerships with those communities. Such partnerships have helped to strengthen the local education system as WV became a partner that filled the gaps they had in promoting literacy in programme areas.

Capacity building: Teachers have been trained in literacy development pedagogy, rich environment development, conducive school environment and community engagement. The district leaders have been trained in assessment, literacy instructions support supervision, teacher mentorship and coaching. The school management committees have been trained in resource mobilization, literacy environment resourcing and teacher supervision. This knowledge will remain in them for some time to use even in the absence of WV.

Tools: The model has a number of data collection tools like STAR tool, classroom observation tools for learners or support supervision tools for teachers and community members. These tools help to collect data that inform relevant stakeholders on what decisions to make to support continued learning of children. The tools have now become standard measures that can be used to promote systematic school improvement.

Data: Literacy achievement and enrollment data being collected from the schools and provided to the district and later EMIS is critical in helping government recognize such schools. Schools that have now learnt to feed their data into EMIS from the WV support can continue doing so even when the project ends.

#### **6.4.5 How the model contributes to the strengthened education community systems**

The model has also strengthened community education systems as follows:

Capacity building: A number of community members and leaders have been trained either as leaders, teachers, parents or as volunteers to support their children's literacy development. Many of them now have improved capacity to support their children to enrol and participate in different literacy programmes either at school or community.

Infrastructure: The model has been able to put in place infrastructure in communities that has become a basis for further engagement. Community members can now proudly look at those facilities as their own initiatives and use them to their benefit in different circumstances.

Literacy support system: Community reading camps and the literacy management system created to oversee literacy development in the community is commendable. This is because the system created integrates the local leaders system into a volunteer space to draw community members to give back to themselves. If this approach is sustained, it will form the basis for further development in communities as other initiatives will get the whole community support that has been cultivated.

#### **6.5 Cross cutting Issues**

In focusing on cross cutting issues raised during the model implementation, this evaluation sought to establish what gender dynamics influenced reading results of children, especially the most vulnerable children. Some of the issues raised include:

##### **6.5.1 How the UL model contributed to the identification and addressing of crosscutting issues of gender equality, and disability**

In implementing the programme, right from the onset, it was about catering for both boys and girls so as to improve their reading results. It had been understood that in some communities, due their cultural biases, boys were being favoured against girls. One teacher observed, "Some parents prioritize boys' education over girls', but we are seeing change as more girls join the reading camps." The model employed an approach that ensured it inbuilt a gender responsive strategy during implementation. For example equal opportunity was given to both boys and girls to participate in literacy activities, the texts used had examples of both boys and girls as role models, sitting arrangement had no specific allocated spaces for either girls or boys as each could go to where they feel comfortable, the reading centres admitted all children irrespective of gender. This was seen from the programme goal, objectives, outcomes and indicators.

The programme from the onset understood that there were socio economic inequalities in communities that needed to be addressed to give chance to disadvantaged children. This was made possible by the identifying only marginalised communities in different regions of the country in order to demonstrate fairness. Rural areas that are economically disadvantaged were prioritised as opposed to urban and more affluent centres to demonstrate equity.

The model has been intentional about inclusivity, ensuring that literacy materials represent both genders equally and incorporating disability-friendly learning strategies. However, some children with disabilities still face challenges in accessing reading materials suited to their needs. A community leader noted, "We are seeing more girls and children with disabilities attending reading sessions, but we need more resources to support them effectively."

##### **6.5.2 How the model implementation promoted the voices of women and girls, men and boys, including persons with disability to ensure they influenced interventions**

The establishment of community reading camps was also a great way of giving opportunity to all people in the community to participate in literacy activities, especially those under privileged and out of schools groups that ordinarily would not have got any chance to be heard. Such initiatives if well utilised can be a good source of inspiration for many to make their views be heard and get opportunity to become more literate. The model encourages participation from all groups, ensuring that different perspectives are heard and included in decision-making. A literacy facilitator shared, "We involve parents, teachers, and community leaders in planning sessions so that everyone's voice is represented." However, continued efforts are needed to address underlying gender norms that may still limit full participation, particularly for girls and children with disabilities.

## 6.6 Key Lessons Learnt

### 6.1 To identify the key lessons so far learned during implementation of the Unlock Literacy Model

There are a number of lessons that can be learnt from the implementation of this model in the project districts, based on interaction with different local implementers and beneficiaries. Some of them are explained in two broad areas as follows:

### 6.2 Innovative practices to be adopted to improve the effectiveness of the UL Model

a) Holistic Approach to Literacy: The Unlock Literacy model is integrating classroom instruction with community-based learning to drive stronger literacy outcomes. Other studies from elsewhere have shown that programs that engage multiple stakeholders including parents, teachers, and community leaders achieve broader and more sustainable impact.

b) Ongoing Teacher Support: Programme officers, working with district education officials were providing continuous professional development and mentorship for teachers, essentially to keep them focused on the model for fidelity. Strengthening educator capacity ensures consistent, high-quality literacy instruction.

c) Community Engagement and Ownership: This model gave communities opportunity to run and manage community reading centres. Actively involving parents and communities fosters local ownership and long-term sustainability. Expanding efforts like locally developed reading materials and volunteer reading sessions can deepen this engagement.

d) Evidence-Based Programming: Regular monitoring and use of data support timely decision-making and adaptive management. Data-driven approaches are key to refining strategies and maximizing impact.

e) The UL model is using plenty of best practices from other countries. When it comes to teacher training, the approach is to give teachers content that they can use to teach with confidence. While this is a good practice to empower teachers, when it comes to literacy teachers in the programme area, this is not working. The teachers need step by step procedures to do it. We can borrow a leaf from the USAID SHRP or LARA or Ministry of Education and Sports Early Grade Reading approach of utilising a 6 or 9 step procedure to teach literacy lessons in lower primary. This will give the teachers what to practically follow for lesson planning and also ease monitoring and support supervision.

f) In some districts, the implementation of the model was weakened by the fact that some teachers were being transferred from project schools to none project schools. These transfers disrupted continuity as trained teachers in the model are replaced by untrained teachers. One way of going about this issue is by signing MoUs with participating districts to make them do teacher transfers within project schools only for a certain given period of time. This approach has worked well with IRC in Kyaka refugee site and Kyegegwa district.

### 6.3 Key Recommendations WV and other stakeholders need to consider to further improve the effectiveness of the UL Model

a) Development of literacy for children should not be the role of a few organisations and institutions with each implementing a different strand. We recommend that all initiatives that are geared towards development of literacy should come together and agree on one integrated and effective model that can be scaled to the whole country.

b) Unlock Literacy model, just like other literacy models in Uganda are being implemented in schools with trained teachers as target trainees. This leaves out training institutions that could have done more at the level of teacher training. It is recommended that the Unlock Literacy model or any other literacy development models be incorporated in teacher training programmes to allow smooth institutionalisation.

c) There are a number of literacy materials that have been developed by WV and other stakeholders that may lay waste when their projects come to an end. It is recommended that WV and those other stakeholders should start the process of collaborating with National Curriculum Development Centre to formalise transition of those materials for use in all schools in Uganda.

d) The literacy assessment tools developed so far are in the hands of organisations for their exclusive use. Many people in other institutions don't have them, yet it would be helpful to all. It is recommended that The Department of Basic Education in Ministry of Education and Sports initiates the process of harmonising different literacy assessment tools from different partners for use in schools.

## 7.0 Cost of Unlock Literacy Model in Uganda

### 7.1 Unlock Literacy Model Beneficiaries

Unlock Literacy Model supported a number of beneficiaries directly and indirectly. For those supported directly, a cost was incurred that has to be evaluated. The following table 14 shows beneficiaries that were reached in their categories.

Table 14: Unlock Literacy Direct Beneficiaries

SN	Category	Number		Expected Total	Actual Total		Level of Progress
		Male	Female		Male	Female	
1	Teachers	1,925	1,925	3,850	518 (35.2%)	952 (64.7%)	38.1
2	Head teachers	275	275	550	235 (54)	200 (46%)	435
3	Community Literacy facilitators	765	765	1,530	2,272	1,124	3,396
4	Children	342,375	342,375	684,750	100,092 (51.7%)	93,251 (48.2%)	193,343
	SMCs trained				1,217	759	1,976
	Local leaders trained				637	396	1,033
	<b>Total</b>	<b>345,340</b>	<b>345,340</b>	<b>690,680</b>	<b>104,971 (52.1%)</b>	<b>96,682 (47.9)</b>	<b>201,653</b>
5	Schools supported			550			435
6	Reading camps opened			306			415
	<b>Total</b>			<b>856</b>			<b>850</b>

Source: World Vision MEL Office

The model anticipated to have a total of 690,680 beneficiaries with equitable gender proportions. However, by 2024, only 29.2% (201,653) (52.1% male and 47.9% female) beneficiaries had been reached. This shows a 30% level of achievement by 2024 for the project in its fourth year. This level is best seen visually as below.

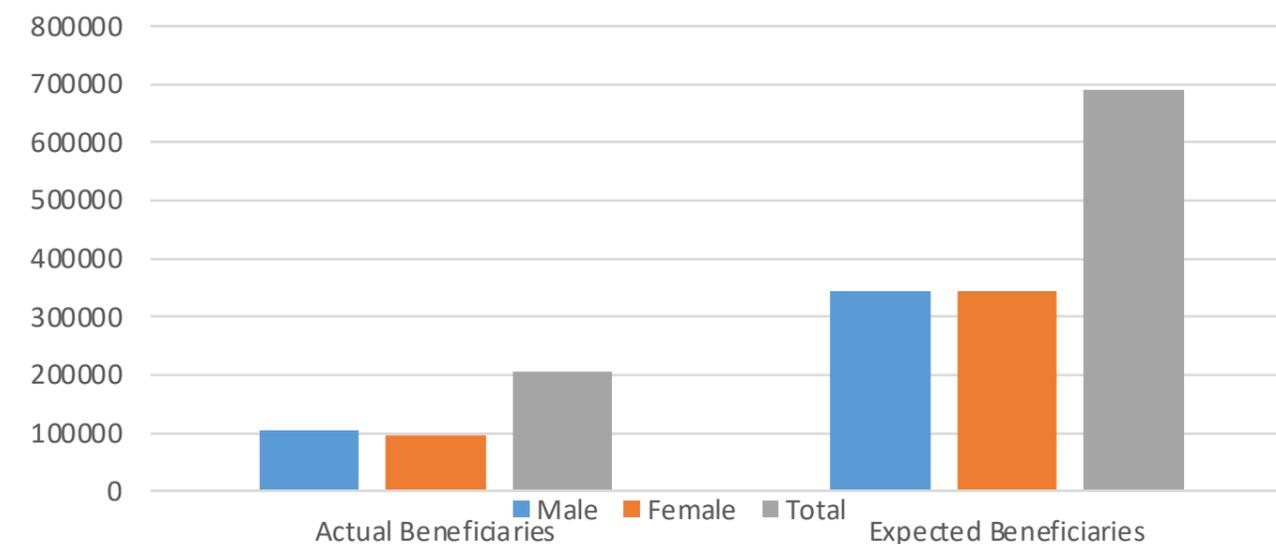


Figure 5: Programme projected beneficiaries

Figure 5 shows the difference between the expected and the actual number of beneficiaries reached by the model. One major explanation for this is that while the model implementation is in the fourth year theoretically, Uganda experienced a two year school lockdown as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. This lockdown has had a far reaching impact on children and learning. Thus, physically, the model by 2024 was in the second year of full implementation. During the lockdown, the model implementers kept incurring additional costs like COVID-19 safety measures, hand washing facilities, emergency medical issues although they were not having full implementation of activities.

Distribution of resources to different centres was based agreements arrived at during review meetings, where schools identified to have more need than others getting more support. The following are some of the cost drivers for a given centre or school, starting with the initial cost of implementation.

## 7.2 Initial cost of implementing the Unlock Literacy model in a new area programme

Initial costs of implementing the Unlock literacy model comes us operational and programmatic costs. Most of the operational costs are recurrent costs that model implementers will keep incurring as long as the model is being implemented. Programmatic costs have one off and periodic costs. The initial costs identified as shown in table 15.

Table 15: Initial Unlock Literacy Implementation Costs

SN	Materials	Quantity	Unit Price per AP	No. in a year	Total	%
<b>Programmatic Costs</b>						
1	Construction materials	40 APs	58,000,000	1	2,320,000,000	9.33185525
2	School reading materials	40APs	19,000,000	1	760,000,000	3.05698707
3	Materials for literacy centres	40 APs	386,650,000	1	15,466,000,000	62.2096868
4	School stationary	40 Aps	8,621,000	1	344,840,000	1.38706766
5	Teacher training	40 APs	80,807,040	1	3,232,281,600	13.0013724
6	School feeding training	40 APs	2,663,840	1	106,553,600	0.42859602
7	Routine sensitization training	40 APs	2,663,840	1	106,553,600	0.42859602
8	School Management	40 APs	2,663,840	1	106,553,600	0.42859602
9	Committee training	40 APs	1,519,840	1	60,793,600	0.24453322
10	Head teacher training	40 APs	9,771,800	1	390,872,000	1.57222454
11	Learning materials production	40 APs	2,571,160	1	102,846,400	0.41368436
12	Parents' training	40 APs	2,571,160	1	102,846,400	0.41368436
13	Reflection meetings Monitoring	40 APs	1,000,000	3	120,000,000	0.48268217
14	Mentorship costs Safe schools' maintenance	40 APs	1,000,000	3	120,000,000	0.48268217
15	Operational costs	40 APs	2,571,160	3	308,539,200	1.24105308
<b>Total</b>					<b>24,861,080,000</b>	<b>100</b>

The summary of initial costs shows the model costs 24,861,080,000 UGX as initial investment in the first year across 40 Aps. The breakdown of the costs includes 4.9% of the total investment going to operational costs only, while the other 95.1% was spent on programmatic costs in one year across 40 Area Programmes (APs). The largest programmatic cost was on purchase of literacy materials (62.2%) followed by teacher training at 13%, while the least expenditure was on head teacher training at 0.24%. What is missing is expenditure on community volunteer literacy facilitators who are expected to extend literacy learning in communities.

## 7.3 Cost of Model Implementation in Area Programme after the Subsequent Year

The model has higher costs at the installation stage. However, these costs start reducing in the subsequent years of implementation and cost per child start to go down as more children are enrolled to use the same initial facilities provided. Details of costs is shown in table 16.

Table 16: Cost of UL implementation in the subsequent years

SN	Materials	Quantity	Unit Price per AP	No. in a year	Total	%
<b>Programmatic Costs</b>						
1	School stationary	40 APs	8,621,000	1	344,840,000	5.46058007
2	Teacher training	40APs	80,807,040	1	3,232,281,600	51.1835416
3	School feeding training	40 APs	2,663,840	1	106,553,600	1.68728821
4	Routine sensitization training	40 Aps	2,663,840	1	106,553,600	1.68728821
5	School Management	40 APs	2,663,840	1	106,553,600	1.68728821
6	Committee training	40 APs	1,519,840	1	60,793,600	0.96267347
7	Head teacher training	40 APs	9,771,800	1	390,872,000	6.18950195
8	Learning materials production	40 APs	2,571,160	1	102,846,400	1.62858428
9	Parents' training	40 APs	2,571,160	1	102,846,400	1.62858428
10	Reflection meetings Monitoring	40 APs	1,000,000	3	120,000,000	1.90021346
11	Mentorship costs Safe schools'	40 APs	1,000,000	3	120,000,000	1.90021346
12	maintenance	40 APs	2,571,160	3	308,539,200	4.88575283
13	Operational costs				1,212,400,000	19.19849
<b>Total</b>					<b>6,315,080,000</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows that 6,315,080,000 UGX will be needed for recurrent costs that will be incurred to implement the model in 40Aps annually after the initial investment. This shows a 74.6% reduction from the initial costs of 24,861,080,000 UGX. Costs that are dropped are those related to construction, purchase of reading materials and support for literacy centres only. The other costs will be scaled down to half for purposes of maintenance. These include school reading and literacy materials supply and learning materials production to cater for tear and wear in the subsequent years. Teacher training, management committee training, school feeding, mentorship, monitoring, parents training, reflection meetings and head teacher training has to be done periodically on a scaled down level to keep momentum and also take care of new members joining the schools.

When we consider the cost of supporting one child through the model, we see that a total of 24,861,080,000 UGX and the number of children reached (201,653), we see a total of 123,286 UGX (34.24 USD) spent on each child in the initial year due to capital intensive installation. However, this figure comes down by half to 31,316 UGX (8.7 USD) per child in subsequent years. Also, as more children are enrolled in the next year but using the same facilities in subsequent years the figure may come down further. This figure is however, better and more realistic compared to what governments in East Africa provide for the same children. For example, children in primary schools in Uganda are given under capitation grant 20,000 UGX (6 USD) per child per year (Kisakye, 2023), Kenya provides 1,420 Ksh (10.97 USD) per year, while Tanzania spends 25,000 Tz sh (10 USD) per child annually (Ndaula, Suru, & Swai, 2025). These figures are however, much lower compared to what developed countries provide for children in the same category. For example, United Kingdom in 2025-26 provided £8,210 (10,602 USD), while USA provided 2,400 USD per child annually (Melanie, 2025).

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### 8.0 Introduction

This section focuses on the conclusion made from the study and later provides implication of the findings to different stakeholders. It concludes with further research for future interrogation.

### 8.1 Conclusion

In this section, the conclusion is provided based on the evaluation criteria of impact, effectiveness, sustainability, cross cutting issues, lessons learnt and cost implication as shown below.

In terms of impact, this study established the impact of the model on reading results of boys and girls in early grades. The findings show that the model contributes 13.8% to improved reading results of boys and girls in early grades of 1 to 3.

In terms of effectiveness, the study established the extent to which the UL model interventions improved reading results of children especially the most vulnerable children. Specifically, the study concluded that the UL model increased reading results of children by 13.8%, strengthened teaching instruction in Grades 1–3 by 85.5% and enhanced the support by communities for children's reading. A larger proportion of parents from the intervention schools (64.7%) started reading at home, 55.6% started reading for their children, while 62.5% started telling stories to their children compared to 52.7%, 38.8% and 57.6% from the control schools respectively. There was also increased support supervision of programme schools by education authorities to a record 100% as compared to 50% in control schools. However, when it comes to fidelity in implementation of model activities, it was noted that this needs further support as teacher attrition brings in new teachers who are not grounded in the model to be in the schools every term.

In terms of sustainability, the model did help in building capacity of teachers, communities and education authorities to implement the model even in the absence of World Vision programme officers. This has been a key pillar for sustainability. Also, establishment of literacy centres in communities and empowerment of community volunteers as facilitators has greatly contributed to raising the awareness of community members as important stakeholders who must lead in supporting development of literacy skills among their children. The model also contributed 60.9% to increased support by parents or guardians for children's learning by participating in literacy activities with their children. However, only 34.9% of parents were reported to be promoting reading readiness at home, with only 44.5% of children accessing reading materials at home.

The model also contributed 100% to increased support by education authorities for children's reading as all project schools were being supported by the education authorities on a regular basis. More however, needs to be done here to quality support they should give for better monitoring.

In terms of cross cutting issues, the model addressed three key cross cutting issues that include gender, social inclusion and disability. To account for gender balance, enrolment in programme schools emphasized equality with no favour for either boys or girls. Likewise literacy materials did not have gender stereotypes that pits one gender against the other. The programme areas are largely located in marginalized communities in rural areas to give them opportunity to excel, thus catering for social inclusion. In terms of disability inclusion, all schools being supported were made to promote inclusive education, thus institutionalizing cross cutting issues.

### 8.2 Further Research

The following areas still need more engagement to get better solutions:

1. Sustainability of community literacy initiatives requires deeper exploration, especially given collapse some of them in a number of programme areas. It is important to understand what has led to the collapse of some learning centres.
2. Teacher attrition presents another challenge, particularly with trained teachers frequently being transferred. Understanding the reasons behind this transfer of the teachers and developing strategies to reduce transfers is important.
3. The development and sustainability of community-generated reading materials also demand further study. While UL has made progress in making resources locally relevant, the continued production and distribution of these materials beyond the project lifecycle is not certain. Research should examine how communities can take ownership of these processes, with support from school management and local government structures.
4. There is also a pressing need to understand the long-term outcomes of early literacy interventions, as gains made in lower primary appear to wane in later grades. Investigating whether early improvements in reading persist through upper primary and affect national exam performance can inform how the UL model might be adapted to support sustained literacy development.

5. Reading comprehension remains the most underperforming skill area, suggesting a gap in both teaching strategies and instructional focus.

**In light of these focus areas, several study questions are proposed:**

6. What are the underlying factors contributing to the collapse of community learning centres in some programme areas?
7. What factors contribute to the frequent transfer of trained literacy teachers in UL-supported schools?
8. What conditions support the sustainability of communities engaging in the production and distribution of locally relevant reading beyond external support?
9. How do early literacy gains from the UL model evolve as learners progress into upper primary grades, and what influence might these gains have on later academic performance?
10. What instructional practices and contextual influences shape reading comprehension outcomes among early grade learners in low-resource settings?



## STORY OF CHANGE: UNLOCK LITERACY, A TRANSFORMATION FOR OUR SCHOOL

### Mr. Fred, Head teacher of Bethenia– Buikwe District

I am the head teacher of Bethenia. This is my second year in this school, and when I arrived, the situation was discouraging. Enrollment was low, learning was ineffective, and both teachers and parents were disengaged. Teachers lacked motivation, and the classroom environment was dull and uninspiring. Parents saw little value in sending their children to school, and this made it difficult to attract new learners. However, World Vision changed everything. Through the Unlock Literacy program, my teachers received training in material creation, classroom management, and assessment. We were introduced to Trainers of Trainers (TOTs) and Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs), who provided mentorship and continuous professional development. Passionate education specialists like Madam Nankya and Madam Canny worked closely with us to create a child-friendly classroom environment that fosters a love for learning.

The impact has been remarkable. My teachers have completely transformed. They are now passionate about their work, spending extra time with learners and ensuring that no child is left behind. One of the lower primary classes, which was once struggling, is now a model of excellence, attracting admiration from other schools. Parents who once ignored the school now actively participate in meetings and school activities. They visit classrooms, see the progress their children are making, and feel confident about the quality of education we provide. Enrollment has skyrocketed. More parents now bring their children to our school after seeing the positive changes. We have become a benchmark school, with visitors from other institutions coming to learn from our experience. The once-empty classrooms are now full of enthusiastic learners, and our school community is stronger than ever. I can confidently say that no school in the area can match our progress. With Unlock Literacy, we have built a school where learning is joyful, teachers are inspired, and children are thriving. We are no longer just a school; we are a centre of excellence—and I am proud to be part of this transformation!

The Male Teacher (MT1), at Burambagira Primary School, Bundibugyo District revealed;

Actually, I have much to talk about unlock literacy, but in summary, actually, World Vision has helped much. I could not even imagine how a P1, P2, P3 child can read because for me I reached even P7 when I did not even know how to read a single sentence. It was by God's grace that I learnt how to read. World Vision has helped us with pedagogical skills of how we can handle these children; learn how to read at an early age. For example, if you go and interview P1, P2, P3, they are best readers because of the skills World Vision has given to us. Second to that, before World Vision or before the introduction of unlock literacy, teachers never had teacher trainings which could help them to refresh their minds about reading or developing learners' reading skills. However, World Vision has helped us with trainings and we have actually improved and we are almost drying up private schools. When parents with children in private schools see children in World Vision schools able to read, they transfer their children from private schools. We were trained in material creation, now almost all our classes are print rich.

The Male Teacher (MT1), at Burambagira Primary School, Bundibugyo District revealed;

I am a TOT, so I have trained several people. I participate in training of the reading club facilitators. Actually, first of all, they come and consult me about the soundings, the letters of alphabet of Rukonjo, because I know much. I am even sometimes invited to go and help the learning centre facilitators, especially to help them how to come up with reading fluency, like the echo reading, guided oral reading, and reading theatre.

### The education officer Kikuube District revealed;

It is a good methodology because actually even countrywide we are getting reports of increased literacy levels. To me as a ToT and an education officer who is overseeing teaching learning process in the district, I see a success story. Today in a class under the unlock literacy model if you pick a learner in class, and ask them to read, you will see them read even when they do not know the word, you will see them use correct sounds than it was in the past. The learners can even read the word which they do not know, but because they are using sounds, they can connect the sounds and be able to read the word even if it has no meaning. But they read it because they have that aspect of sounds.

A female parent of Nyamirima Primary school (FP3) at Kabarekera camp in Kyabigambire revealed;

I am a mobiliser on the community learning centre committee. So, my role is to mobilise parents to send the children to study and provide them with materials required for learning. I also mobilise parents to support the learning centre by providing porridge for the learners and maintaining it.

A female parent of Kikuube BC primary school (FP4) at Kisiiga camp in Kikuube revealed;

I am a mobiliser on the learning centre committee. So, my role involves encouraging parents to send the learners to the learning centre and I also follow up to see whether the children actually reach the centre. I also from time to time go to the centre to monitor whether the children are learning.

Male parent of Burambagira Primary (MP2) at Tangarani Learning Centre in Bundibugyo revealed;  
I work as BBC, just as I told you, I just keep materials, books and lend books to children and parents. I also give books to the parents when they come to borrow books for their children.

Male parent of Burambagira Primary (MP3) at Tangarani Learning Centre in Bundibugyo revealed;  
I supported the building of the community learning centre. When we were building the community learning centre I gave 10 poles for building. I also participated in the construction process. World Vision provided us with iron sheets that were used to roof the building.

The Female Teacher (FT4), at Kikuube BC Primary School, Kikuube District revealed;

The class is full of materials and I was declared among the best teachers in creating a rich print class environment in the schools in this area. I have quite many materials in my classroom. I have manila cards, reading charts, sacks and polycine bags. I created the print rich classroom environment myself. We were trained how to create the environment in a workshop. They taught us how to make the materials, how to write on those charts using markers, how to write capital letters, and small letters, and the qualities of good charts. Then I learned how to make charts.

The Female Teacher (FT2), at Sir Tito Winy Primary school, Kikuube District revealed

Due to lack of some materials, we end up spending our money. For instance, when we were told that schools were competing, or when visitors are coming to inspect us, we put in money. Even when they promised to select the best teachers we put in our money to win. That arrangement gave use morale, encouraged us and motivated us to invest in creating very rich print classroom environments even when there is no payment we have been getting.



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## 9.0 Appendices

School Based Test About Reading (STAR)

To be accessed from this link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hbXGuWviFOArifkta8U4akvfzKxBtklg?usp=sharing>

Appendix B: Paper Assessment

To be accessed from this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hbXGuWviFOArifkta8U4akvfzKxBtklg?usp=sharing>

Reading Club Observation Form

To be accessed from this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hbXGuWviFOArifkta8U4akvfzKxBtklg?usp=sharing>

World Vision Staff Tool

To be accessed from this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hbXGuWviFOArifkta8U4akvfzKxBtklg?usp=sharing>

Teachers' Tool

To be accessed from this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hbXGuWviFOArifkta8U4akvfzKxBtklg?usp=sharing>

Community Leaders Tool

To be accessed from this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hbXGuWviFOArifkta8U4akvfzKxBtklg?usp=sharing>

District Education Officials Tool

To be accessed from this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hbXGuWviFOArifkta8U4akvfzKxBtklg?usp=sharing>

**This report was conducted in partnership with Kyambogo university**



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