World Vision®

Literacy Boost
Creating strong literacy foundations for early grade learners

By the end of 2016, the World Vision and Save the Children Partnership for Literacy will aim to measurably improve the literacy skills of 1.5 million girls and boys in 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The global learning crisis

Over the past decade, there has been a large global investment in improving children's access to education. However, the expansion in children's school enrolment has strained the capacity of education systems to ensure quality learning. Globally, 250 million children – including many of the most vulnerable – are not learning basic literacy and numeracy skills even though half have attended school for at least four years.[1]

Literacy unlocks potential

Literacy unlocks human potential and is the cornerstone of development. It leads to better health, better employment opportunities, and safer and more stable societies. Children who do not develop reading skills during early primary education are on a lifetime trajectory of limited educational progress and, therefore, limited economic opportunities. Learning to read in the first years of primary school is critical for retention and success in future grades. The educational achievement of a country's population is directly correlated with its economic growth rate.

TIATEMJEN JAMIR / WORLD VISION

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The Literacy Boost solution

Literacy Boost [2] is a proven literacy programme that supports the development of reading skills in young children. It is built around the five core skills of reading acquisition: letter knowledge, sounding out words, reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

There are three core components in the Literacy Boost programme:

1. Reading Assessments – Baseline and endline reading assessments measure children's reading levels, evaluate their literacy learning needs, and help schools and ministries of education track students' progress.

2. Teacher Training – Teachers learn to incorporate the five core reading skills into their curricula in order to ensure that children are learning to read and remain motivated to learn while in the classroom. They also learn how to create a print rich environment in their classrooms.

3. Community Action – Mobilising parents and communities to support children as they learn to read through fun out-of-school literacy activities and through the creation of locally relevant reading materials.

These steps address the ways children learn to read, how teachers and parents can help, and create an environment for that to happen anywhere: in school, at home and in the community.

[1] UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2013/2014   [2] Literacy Boost is a copyrighted tool designed, developed and owned by Save the Children.

Giving literacy a "boost"

Literacy Boost is different from other reading programmes because it gives entire communities the tools they need to encourage their children to get excited about reading. Literacy Boost strengthens national education curricula so that ministries of education and teachers can use the tools they already have, complemented by additional training, to help children learn to read with increased comprehension.

Literacy Boost creates space in the community for children who might not have access to books at home to continue learning with their friends. After-school reading camps and clubs are led by local volunteers who teach children songs, games and stories that reinforce what they are learning in school. Book banks act as portable libraries full of colourful story books – often written by parents and community members – that reflect children's values, traditions, language and culture. Reading Buddies are paired with children to encourage reading in the home. Parents are also taught how to support their children's learning needs by creating reading corners, or using found materials to practise writing skills.

A world full of books

Many of the most vulnerable children grow up without access to books in the language they speak, or stories that reflect their culture and experiences. Locally relevant reading materials are books and stories written in a child's first language – the one spoken in the home. Literacy Boost provides opportunities for community members – young and old, women and men – to write and publish books that speak to their traditions, values and hopes, using a simple publishing software. These books are available to children through book banks, libraries and reading camps. Litearcy Boost programmes also work with local publishers to procure high quality, contextualised, local language reading materials. Supporting local publishers also helps sustain a more vibrant market of books and other learning materials.

Measuring impact

Literacy Boost is in various stages of implementation in 12 countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nepal, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland and Tanzania.

In Ethiopia, after only six months of Literacy Boost interventions, 35 per cent of students became new readers, compared to 19 per cent in comparison schools. In Malawi, a baseline assessment showed only two per cent of children could read a passage in their mother tongue. The last assessment showed 37 per cent of students in Literacy Boost schools were able to read the passage, compared with 24 per cent of students in comparison schools. In Burundi, girls who participated in Literacy Boost increased their reading comprehension by 31 per cent. The improvement equates to an additional two to five months of learning.

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Children attend an informal Literacy Boost learning session where they access locally relevant teaching materials and practise their reading skills in Ethiopia.

For more information about Literacy Boost, please email Education and Life Skills at World Vision International: EdLS@wvi.org

www.www.wvi.org/literacy-boost
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