

World Vision Burundi (WVB) has implemented the **Improved Learning and Reading Environment (ILRE)** programme, using the **Unlock Literacy (UL)** project model, since 2015. Funded by World Vision Germany, ILRE was carried out in 51 schools in Cankuzo province until September 2018. The project aimed to improve pupils' learning achievements and their access to quality education in a child-friendly environment.

The evaluation used mixed-methods to gather quantitative and qualitative data from key project stakeholders. This included a project document review, secondary data review of provincial education data; key informant interviews with 6 project staff and 7 provincial education officers; self-reported quantitative survey with 239 parents; focus group discussions with over 100 parents and SMC members; a school survey of 36 school environments; a classroom-based lesson observation and interview of 36 Grade 3 teachers; and a pupil literacy assessment of 935 Grade 3 pupils from 36 schools in Cankuzo Province.

ILRE used **school-based** and **community-based interventions** to reach its goals. The school-based interventions included teacher training, teacher coaching, increasing print-rich environments, and school management committee (SMC) capacity development for creating school improvement plans. The community-based interventions included reading camps, books banks, parental awareness sessions, reading buddies, and volunteer monitoring support. Equal attention was paid to both school-based and community-based interventions. There were gaps, however, in the frequency, scope, and adaptability of these activities which impacted overall program effectiveness.

### Key Milestones



**10,559 girls and 10,921 boys in Grades 1-3 participated in ILRE in-school activities**



**182 female and 117 male teachers trained**



**51 School Management Committees trained in school improvement planning**



**153 Reading Camps established**



**186 female and 123 male community volunteers trained**



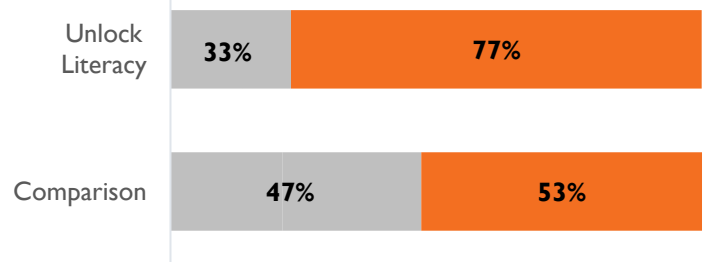
# WHAT DID WE LEARN?

1

## Unlock Literacy had positive impact on children's reading skills.

- Controlling for pupil background factors and school environment, UL had a positive impact on fluency and advanced reading comprehension skills for readers.
- The interventions had little to no impact on students struggling with acquiring reading skills. Specifically, students who repeated Grade 1 or 2 were more likely to remain non-readers than those who did not.

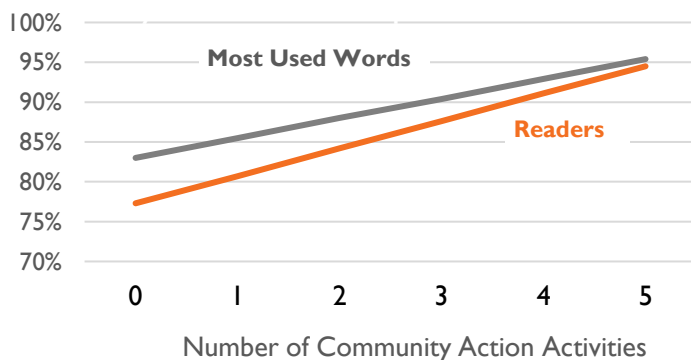
Unlock Literacy students are more likely to be **readers with comprehension** than their comparison peers.



2

## Participation in community-based interventions was correlated with higher achievement but overall, the project struggled with participation.

Children's reading skills increased the more they participated in UL community-based activities.



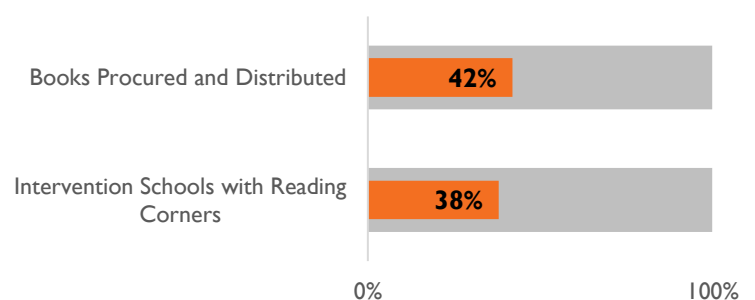
- Multilevel regression analysis controlling for pupil background and school environment showed pupils who participated in most or all community-based activities were more likely to be readers than those who participated in few or no activities.
- However, the evaluation found only 30% of grade 1-3 pupils participating in community-based interventions, far short of the 75% target.
- Going forward, if implementation of community-based interventions can increase pupil participation, impact on children's reading skills will increase.

3

## WVB produced high-quality storybooks but the books did not reach all children.

- The project produced 145 book titles in Kirundi, including primers and storybooks levelled across grade 1-3 reading ages.
- Despite sufficient financial resources and objectives for project-wide access to these reading materials, WVB fell far short of its targets for enabling access to reading materials.
- For future implementation, WVB should continue to create high quality story books, alongside a strategy to sustain access to these books in school and community libraries.

The **achieved** outputs for reading corners and book procurement fell short of the targets.



The evaluation found strong evidence of impact and project uptake by schools, communities and local education authorities. Impact was greater among project participants that actively participated in the programme. With higher implementation fidelity, incorporation of targeted interventions for struggling pupils and adjustments for the changing educational policy context, Unlock Literacy will have a strong impact on educational outcomes in Burundi.