



An Implementation Outcomes Evaluation for the Nal'ibali FUNda Leader Network

Research by Stella Sithole

PMhil in Programme Evaluation – 2021

Summary by Katherine Morse,

Nal'ibali

**The UCT Knowledge Co-op facilitated this collaborative project
between Nal'ibali and UCT.**

See <http://www.knowledgeco-op.uct.ac.za> or
Contact us at know-op@uct.ac.za / 021 – 650 4415

Literature Review:

Literacy development programmes have been developed and evaluated internationally. Although programmes focus on developing different parts of literacy (comprehension, fluency, writing and vocabulary) there are congruent findings that are worth noting.

- Paired reading contributes towards improved reading comprehension and fluency.
- Teacher training improves reading pedagogy
- The use of multilingual materials enables better engagement with English as a language of instruction.
- Implementations at the community level which engaged parents contributed to the building of literacy rich environments outside of schools as well as being positive for parent-child interactions.

Factors contributing to the success of programmes:

- Availability of resources that are age-appropriate, relevant to target population and in familiar languages
- Tutor training is vital to the success of programs (indicating that quantity of time on task does not substitute for quality)
- Literacy develops in a context of partnerships – government, teachers, libraries, communities, parents.

Study Design:

The study is qualitative, consisting of ten semi-structured interviews with FUNda leaders who registered Reading Clubs in 2018-2019. The study scope was constrained by Covid, interviews had to be conducted by phone; by language as the researcher only spoke one South African language – English; by out-of-date contact details for potential participants and potential participants declining to participate.

The questions were formatted around an implementation outcomes framework developed by Proctor et al¹:

Outcome Measure	Evaluation questions
Acceptability	To what extent are the FUNda Leaders satisfied with the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?
Adoption	How is the intervention uptake?
Appropriateness	To what extent do the FUNda Leaders think or feel the campaign is relevant? Using which medium or setting?
Feasibility	To what extent are the recruited reading club members (activity beneficiaries) returning for the service?
Fidelity	Are the programme activities being carried out with consistency as prescribed and planned?
Penetration	To what extent is the programme reaching its target per annum? What have been the reasons for over/under coverage?
Sustainability	How sustainable is the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?

¹ Proctor, E., Silimere, H., Raghavan, R., Hovmand, P., Aarons, G., Bunge, A., Griffey, R., & Hensley, M. (2011). Outcomes for implementation research: Conceptual distinctions, measurement challenges, and research agenda. *Administration and Policy in Mental*

Effectiveness	How and in what ways have the FUNda Leader Network and its activities changed people? What success stories have been observed? Are the programme activities achieving the intended results as outlined in the programme theory?
---------------	---

Results:

1. Theme One- Perceptions towards the FUNda Leader Network

All ten participants indicated that they were happy to be part of the network because they are passionate about reading, working with children for their personal development and helping children develop their reading and writing skills.

I am happy with the reading club I created, I love reading and that's why I joined the Nal'ibali campaign so that I can also help children to grow login and enjoying reading. Seeing children developing the love to read books. (Participant 6)

Five participants reported that they appreciated the training, even though three were already qualified teachers.

Communities appreciated clubs - *Instead of doing things in the streets, they are getting an education.* Parents and teachers reported an improvement in children's reading and parents appreciated that someone was helping with homework. Clubs that were school based as part of the school routine did not have any community involvement. All leaders reported that their beneficiaries were happy with the clubs.

Despite overall acceptance and support, two participants reported that some parents did not support the club activities and wouldn't allow children to attend.

2. Theme two – Activities being conducted by the FUNda Leaders

Activities listed included reading aloud, dramas or plays, playing games, writing poems, retelling stories, singing and songwriting. Participants were divided as to which activities were most important with some maintaining that all were important.

3. Theme three – Strategies implemented to improve attendance

Most FUNda leaders had strategies to attract participants and encourage attendance. Two participants reported the use of refreshments purchased through their own resources and sought as donations from local service providers. Seven participants reported using a variety of activities and diverse reading materials to keep children interested. One participant cited the use of competitions with prizes to motivate children. Another mentioned the importance of treating all members fairly. One used computers and computer lessons to motivate join up and participation. The computers were an already existing resource in the community.

Some FUNda leaders conducted home visits to recruit parents to support their children attending the club. They felt that some parents did not support due to a low appreciation for reading coming from their own lack of education. Awareness raising was an important strategy and effective for improving attendance.

Some of the parents they don't understand the importance of reading especially those that didn't have access to education. In cases like these I have to pursue the parent first before I pursue the child. This will help the parent as well as the children so that we can work together towards improving the child's reading skills. (Participant 6)

4. Outcomes of the FUNda Leader Network

Nine participants reported that the campaign had made significant changes in children's reading abilities.

At the school close to where I stay there was a boy who was not able to read. I used to take him to my house after school alone and teach him how to read. So the teacher noticed a change in the kid's reading ability and they asked him what had caused the improvement. The learner told them that it was Miss Nal'ibali. The teacher called me and thanked me for what I had done. Because of this, the boy was won a reading champion at reading competitions that were done at school. This made me happy to see the change I brought in the boy's life. (Participant 3).

All participants felt that their activities helped to grow a culture of reading. Children were now reading at home in their spare time and asking parents to buy books for them. The children also became role models for other children, inspiring them to join the reading sessions and helping them with their reading in their spare time.

Three participants commented that the campaign had improved access to reading materials, particularly via reading supplements. They particularly appreciate that the supplements are multilingual.

The activities of the clubs and home visits from leaders, led to a change in parents' perceptions of reading.

Kids are now reading and am also happy with the fact that some parents have understood the importance of reading. Encouraging their kids to attend the reading sessions as well as buying books for them. (Participant 5)

One leader even reported that children were encouraging their parents to read.

Children I read with, they went back in their homes and also motivated their parents to read and also read together with them.

Five participants reported that club members' knowledge and self-confidence levels were improved. This increase in confidence lead to improved reading and children also were willing to put themselves forward for other leadership and learning opportunities, such as applying to the Oprah Winfrey school.

There was this child who couldn't read, couldn't write but it's not that she couldn't do that. She was not sure of herself, she was scared to express herself. She could see what others would be doing but felt like she couldn't due to a lack of confidence, like whatever she's going to say is wrong. So, since we started reading in my reading club, I have noticed that she has improved. She is becoming someone else she is supposed to be. (Participant 9)

Two participants mentioned that the club was important for getting children off the street, contributing to safety and productivity. One participant mentioned that being a leader inspired her own development as a reader.

5. Factors affecting the FUNda Leader Network

Participants highlighted that they were happy with the FUNda leader network. Very few challenges were mentioned.

Access to supplements has improved community reading resources however sometimes the quantity is not enough to send home with club members. Libraries are sometimes too far to access. Schools who run clubs after school must compete with other extra-curricular activities affecting numbers on some days. Even though some club members would like to meet more frequently, FUNda leaders cited their own competing commitments.

6. Sustainability of the FUNda Leader Network

Participants were asked what they thought would happen to their reading clubs if the campaign ended. All ten participants confirmed that the reading clubs would continue if the campaign ended as knowledge and skills imparted by the network would remain. However, participants also pled that the campaign must not end.

Yoo, my wish is it mustn't end. But if it ends, we will still remain with the knowledge and skills that we have learned through Nal'ibali, even today we are still doing what we were taught by Nal'ibali. (Participant 1)

Some participants said they had supplements kept safe that they could continue to use as well as books from Nal'ibali and the library.

Participants from school-based clubs confirmed that the clubs had been integrated into the school timetable and curricula so the clubs would continue even without Nal'ibali. However, community-based clubs said that without the clubs, there was a possibility of the demise of reading activities in the community.

I think it will be difficult because they won't be having someone like me to motivate and push or follow up on them. (Participant 10)

Discussion & Recommendations:

- *Acceptability* – Nal'ibali is targeting and attracting the correct volunteers into the network.
- *Adoption* – FUNda leaders were skilled in creating safe spaces and youth enjoyed the activities and their skill improvement. FUNda leader training is identified as a key reason for the success of the network. When parents opposed reading clubs, home visits were effective in recruiting parent support.

Sithole suggests that Nal'ibali partner with literacy organisations that promote reading for adults in the same target communities.

This would provide both support for children in reading at home and also role models for children.

- *Appropriateness* – Network activities were perceived as relevant and appropriate in addressing literacy needs. FUNda leaders were trained and reading materials were provided. Choice of reading materials was identified as being important.
- *Feasibility* – There was repeat attendance at clubs and children looked forward to attending. This was attributed both to the activities offered and the incentives to motivate attendance such as use of refreshments.
- *Fidelity* - The club activities reported were reading aloud, dramas or plays, playing games, writing poems, retelling stories, singing and story writing. These activities form part of the Nal'ibali training.

Frequency of meetings was between one and five times per week with a mean of three. Nal'ibali recommends at least one per week, so implementation is as recommended.

- *Penetration* – FUNda leaders did not have targets for reach.

Sithole recommends that Nal'ibali encourages FUNda leaders to have targets and boundaries for area of coverage for ease of monitoring and avoidance of redundancy in programs. The development of an assessment tool for leaders to use would assist them with tracking and implementing in a more systemic manner.

- *Sustainability* -There is a high probability that FUNda leader activities would continue if Nal'ibali withdrew support. This is due to the quality of training, the provision of resources and general support from the community/ school. However, it is also dependent on the ongoing work of the FUNda leader. Leaders did not think that community-based reading activities would continue without a literacy activist.

Sithole recommends that school-based club sustainability can be improved by augmenting partnerships with DoE to ensure that reading is incorporated into school timetables and curricula, that teachers are trained on implementing reading periods and that schools are supported with a variety of appropriate reading materials. Community sustainability would be enhanced by a more comprehensive (cross generational) approach, as noted in Adoption section above.

- *Effectiveness* – FUNda leader activities were found to be effective in improving reading and or literacy. Effectiveness was facilitated by development of reading abilities, access to reading materials, creating a culture of reading, building confidence and partnerships with parents.



UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP

This report is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike license:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/za/deed.en>