World Vision Canada

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Implementing Consortium

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Acronyms:

CIES	Comparative and International Education Societies
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FOSDEH	Foro Social para la Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DTST	District Teacher Support Team (Ghana)
DCP	Developing country partners
EGRA	Early Grades Reading Assessment
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GES	Ghana Education Services
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
KII	Key Informant Interview
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
KMET	Knowledge Management, Exchange, and Translation
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
MINED	Ministry of Education (Nicaragua)
MoE	Ministry of Education
MEQA	Measuring Evidence of Quality Achieved
NaCCA	National Council for Curriculum Assessment (Ghana)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NTC	National Teacher Council
OISE	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
ROSIE	Research on Scaling the Impacts of Innovations in Education
RLP	Regional Learning Partners
SECAPPH	Secretary of Culture, Arts and Heritage of the Peoples of Honduras
SEDUC	Secretary of Education (Honduras)
SOEL	School of Education and Leadership
SLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UGhana	University of Ghana
UL	Unlock Literacy
ULLN	Unlock Literacy Literary Network
WV	World Vision
WVC	World Vision Canada
WVG	World Vision Ghana
WVH	World Vision Honduras
WVN	World Vision Nicaragua

Project general objective

The research project, *Improving Literacy for Children Through the Support of Community Networks*, explored how community-based actors (teachers, community leaders, volunteers, parents, administrators, etc.) work together, adapt, and interact with the formal education sector to implement and support community literacy activities (including reading camps) to improve girls' and boys' reading fluency within distinct local learning systems/ contexts in Ghana, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The research provides evidence on factors that enable and hinder collaborative stakeholder networks that aim to advance quality, sustainable, scalable, and effective gender-responsive and inclusive education programming for early-grade students (grades 1-3) to improve children's literacy levels within vulnerable populations.

Key activities across countries

The research project in Ghana, Nicaragua, and Honduras involved a comprehensive and collaborative research process with several key activities. These activities included developing and refining the research design and methodology and creating qualitative data collection tools such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and observation instruments.

Data collection was conducted in two phases designed to gather data on the role of community networks in supporting children's literacy at 2 points in time, roughly one year apart. Data collection included consultations with multiple stakeholders from the Ministry of Education (MoE) to community levels. In Nicaragua, the MoE required an advance review of the tools used to collect information from teachers and Municipal level staff.

In addition to data collection, the research project also focused on capacity strengthening. This involved building the capacity of local partners, including community-based organizations and government agencies, to support children's literacy initiatives in their respective countries. Capacity strengthening was achieved through various training sessions, workshops, and mentorship programs. Specific training activities included the following:

- In Honduras and Nicaragua, strengthening Unlock Literacy (UL) implementation skills for critical stakeholders such as community and faith leaders, parents, youth, teachers, and directors of educational centers included understanding the UL model, implementing the Measuring Evidence of Quality Achieved (MEQA) monitoring tool, Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) issues and, in the case of Honduras, addressing Specific Learning Difficulties (DEA) in children. The capacity-strengthening component of the research project significantly impacted scaling up the use of the UL model in these two countries. They could use the UL model to support literacy initiatives in their communities, which, based on data collected from teachers, reading camp facilitators and parents, helped improve children's literacy outcomes.

- In Ghana, the project trained members of the District Teacher Support Team (DTST) to build their capacity for qualitative research. They engaged as enumerators and improved their skills in data gathering, research question design, and interview methods.

- To ensure that the data collected was properly analyzed and interpreted, OISE trained researchers in Nicaragua and Honduras on NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program. Additionally, a GESI workshop for the project's researchers was conducted to ensure they had a shared understanding of key gender concepts related to GESI in education, DFID's Educational Marginalization Framework, and understood the importance of using a GESI lens throughout all research processes.

Furthermore, the research project emphasized knowledge mobilization. This involved disseminating research findings to relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations. Knowledge mobilization aimed to ensure that the research findings were used to inform policy and practice in children's literacy.

The research project in Ghana, Nicaragua, and Honduras made significant progress through key activities. The collaborative research process, capacity strengthening, and knowledge mobilization were essential to the project's success. The research findings highlighted the alignment of the UL model with the official literacy methodologies and policies. They provided valuable insights into the role of community networks in supporting children's literacy.

Main research findings, outputs, and outcomes

The research project conducted on World Vision's Unlock Literacy reading camps has generated important knowledge and outcomes related to adaptation and scaling for impact. Through a cross-country comparison, the study identified key factors enabling reading camp implementation. These factors include the committed actions of multiple key actors within community networks who support reading camps; the flexibility to adapt the reading camp model to the local context; building on already existing systems, structures, and relationships; implementing reading camp activities that complement the national curriculum; and providing young children with learning opportunities in safe spaces outside of formal schooling. Additionally, key stakeholders perceive the benefits of reading camps.

The findings included key factors that hinder reading camp implementation. These factors include the Covid-19 pandemic across the three countries and hurricanes in Honduras and Nicaragua, changes in personnel such as reading camp facilitators and government officials, children paid and unpaid work both within and outside the household, the location of the reading camp space, and elements that require funding such as the provision of training, reading materials, incentives for volunteers, and ongoing support.

The study also explored the impact of gender norms and societal beliefs on the participation of children (girls and boys) and adults (women and men) in reading camps. Since gender norms and dynamics vary across the three countries, findings indicate the need for context-specific approaches to promoting gender equity in education. Findings across the three countries indicate that girls' household responsibilities often limit their free time and ability to participate in reading camps, while boys' responsibilities to help the family through paid work may affect their participation. In Ghana, girls have less free time than boys to participate in reading camps due to their household responsibilities. In Honduras and Nicaragua, women are more likely to volunteer as reading camp facilitators than men because of traditional gender roles that assign women responsibility for household tasks and child-rearing, while men work outside the home.

Overall, the research project generated important knowledge and outcomes related to adaptation and scaling for the impact of WV's Unlock Literacy reading camps. The study's findings and key learnings can

inform future programming, policy development, and capacity-strengthening initiatives for WV's reading camp initiatives and contribute to improving literacy outcomes for young children.

Regarding research knowledge generation outputs, the project produced a series of primary and secondary documents, analyses, and material to help support the knowledge mobilization and use of evidence, insights, and learning exchanges. Among the most relevant, we can mention the final research reports per country (with summaries and presentations), the comparative cross-country analysis, two complementary studies in Honduras (on education trends and GESI), reading techniques manuals in Nicaragua, and 10 videos.

Main lessons and recommendations for future research

The project in Ghana, Nicaragua, and Honduras highlighted several important lessons and recommendations for future research that emerged from the implementation experience and research process. One key lesson was that the academic researcher-practitioner collaboration effectively addressed complex and multifaceted literacy-related issues. This collaboration enabled the project to leverage a wide range of expertise and knowledge in identifying effective literacy programs and interventions that are culturally and contextually appropriate for the targeted communities. Another lesson drawn is the need to analyze stakeholders or actors in educational innovation projects informing how best to scale up the project and identify decision-makers, their roles, functions, and levels. Mapping of stakeholders proved instrumental in identifying what actions to take in case of unexpected changes e.g. the death of the National Director of Primary Education in Nicaragua.

More importantly, establishing strong working relationships with the Ministry of Education and other government authorities proved critical for all the country teams. This involves actively engaging them from the beginning, ensuring the importance of formal agreements and maintaining continuous relationships, even in the face of significant changes in government structures. Collaborating with governments was essential in navigating contextual challenges and complexities. Governments' involvement helped ensure that the project had the necessary legal and regulatory support and was aligned with the national literacy policy frameworks.

The study's findings have led to country-specific discussions about potential future research based on the contextual gaps and findings. The Ghana team recommended further research on the impact of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the early grade level, which would provide strong evidence to policymakers to commit fully to community-based literacy innovations such as the reading camps. The teams from Nicaragua and Honduras recommend further research exploring the correlation between progress in improved literacy in school and the reading camps (known as reading clubs in Nicaragua), as they feel it would help their scaling efforts. This includes conducting a robust measurement study of the effect of reading camps on children's reading skills, critical thinking, and overall performance in the school system. There is also a recommendation to conduct a cost analysis of the funding needed to implement reading camps, including strengthening the capacities of reading promoters and parents.

Finally, related to partnerships (between governments, NGOs, CSOs, and/or the private sector), translation of ideas, and development policies in education (or any other sector), it would be helpful to do more research to better understand good practices on how partnerships develop and may need to change (modify and adapt) in complex policy-making contexts, where translating learning into the development policy arena is shaped by different interests/motivations and – in some cases - with potential to generate some level of tension.

PROJECT RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

Children who do not learn to read in the early grades fall further behind each school year, struggle to catch up, and may drop out of school. The inability to read proficiently in the early grades can lead to limited educational and economic opportunities for boys and girls, with girls being particularly disadvantaged. World Vision's Unlock Literacy program aims to address these gaps in basic literacy learning by using a holistic approach that supports good literacy practices for children both in and out of school. UL reinforces literacy skills at home and in community-based reading camps and collaborates with government systems, schools, families, and communities to sustain reading improvements for all children, including the most marginalized.

The research was a three-country comparative case study using a primarily qualitative approach with some quantitative elements. The main research question was as follows: *How can community actors and networks in Ghana, Honduras, and Nicaragua, each with distinct contexts, be enabled and strengthened to develop and use their own adaptive systems when implementing World Vision's Unlock Literacy program at scale to improve the literacy outcomes of girls and boys, including those who are marginalized?* Researchers in each country conducted a qualitative case study in school communities implementing UL (40 case studies). Using a comparative case study approach, the research design provided holistic and detailed qualitative findings related to the complex social phenomena studied. These case studies provide rich, detailed findings describing how community members (including teachers and school heads) work together to support literacy learning by adapting the UL model. Researchers in each country produced country-specific reports, and OISE produced a cross-country comparative report to understand the similarities and differences in how community members implement community-based activities across the three countries.

Tailored and localized adaptations were implemented throughout the project to overcome contextual barriers caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, climate, and socio-political factors. These adaptations included shifting to virtual meetings and developing contingency plans. Even though there were small changes to the research design and certain adaptations to the UL implementation, the project was informed by ongoing analysis and reflection on the main objectives and the grant agreement with IDRC.

SECTION 1: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

1.1 Objectives achievement

During the project cycle, the team faced several challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a significant challenge, leading to school system disruptions and, in some cases, school closures. During the first year, the ULLN research was significantly delayed, and changes within the Ministry of Education in some countries led to temporary disruptions. However, the team adapted to these challenges by shifting to virtual training and remote support for teachers and students. The project team worked closely with newly appointed officials to ensure that project activities continued. They used this time to engage and work collaboratively with the MoE and policymakers in each country and advocate for increased support for inclusive education.

Despite all the impediments, the project managed to achieve its objectives with various activities focusing on the research process (design, data collection and analysis), implementation and scale of the UL model

(trainings, setting up of reading camps, play-based activities and monitoring) and Knowledge Mobilisation processes (dissemination of Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings, stakeholder engagement meetings and discussions) as outlined below. Successes are attributed to various factors, including regular pivoting and establishing contingency plans in the project's first year, routine team updates and review meetings through sensemaking sessions, and an IDRC-approved no-cost extension to complete outstanding activities.

1.2 Main activities

During the project's life, the project operationalized the research plan, supported implementing the Unlock Literacy project model, produced individual final research reports per country, a cross-country comparative report, and implemented a knowledge mobilization plan.

The project also participated in the Brooking Institution's Research on Scaling the Impacts of Innovations in Education (ROSIE) initiative by providing data related to Nicaragua's experiences of researching scaling (such as UL network mapping) and by engaging in activities and trainings. Project researchers also participated in the LAC and Africa 19 KIX Hubs international dissemination activities. These activities served as platforms for knowledge sharing, reflections, and ongoing learning that informed and strengthened the overall research process for all countries.

Below is an outline of some of the key activities conducted by our project during its life.

Related to the research process: The operationalization of the research plan was a pivotal component of the project, and the research team successfully implemented it. OISE played a vital role in the project by providing guidance and expert advice throughout Phase 1 and 2 processes, including during data collection, data analysis, consolidation of findings, and development of final reports. This support was fundamental to ensuring the integrity and efficacy of the research process and learning agenda.

- **Pre-data collection meetings**- These meetings brought together education stakeholders in government and communities to deliberate on the commencement of the research and share their expectations. The stakeholders' engagement was extensive, and representatives from various ministries of education, community leaders, faith leaders, community members, donors, and parents' associations were invited to participate in the research. The involvement of educational center authorities, directors, community volunteers, parents and teachers in implementing the UL model and research was also crucial. The pre-data collection meetings were instrumental, especially during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, as they served as sensitization platforms and awareness sessions to discuss the adaptations required to implement the reading camps while ensuring children's safety. In Honduras, they were essential to reinforce the significance of understanding how community networks responded and adapted to support the development of girls' and boys' reading skills, further emphasizing the value of the research. In Nicaragua, meetings with officials of the Ministry of Education at different levels served as the project's official launch, paving the way to attaining authorization to execute all project activities.

  Enumerator/Data collector Training: The research teams in each country trained enumerators with the skills and knowledge necessary to collect data effectively and efficiently. The trainings covered questionnaire administration, data quality control, ethical considerations, and data safety protocols. Enumerators were also trained to interact with study participants and ensure

their privacy and confidentiality. For the first data collection phase in Ghana, the University of Ghana, in collaboration with WV Ghana (WVG), conducted a week-long enumerator training where 42 people participated, including 30 enumerators, 5 University of Ghana staff and 7 WVG staff. The enumerators were qualified teachers identified through a partnership with the Ghana Education Service (GES) and released to serve as enumerators in both phases of the research. For the second phase of data collection, another cohort of 20 enumerators were trained, drawn from the 5 ULLN implementing areas.

- **Data Collection -** Research teams collected data in two phases, Phase 1 and Phase 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and reading camp observations were used to collect data from 40 community sites across the three countries in Phase 1 and 30 communities in Phase 2. Data were collected from children attending reading camps, parents, volunteer reading camp facilitators, teachers, head teachers, faith leaders, Traditional Authorities, local government officials, Ministry of Education officials, and WV staff implementing UL. Each country produced a Phase 1 and a Final report. OISE, as the Research Lead, produced a cross-country comparative report.

Related to implementing the UL model and Capacity Strengthening: Across the three countries, the project successfully built the capacities of individuals within communities, education systems, and research teams to improve children's learning outcomes. In Honduras, for example, the project focused on strengthening learning networks and building teachers' professional capacities to implement the UL model and address specific learning difficulties, leading to higher support to reading camps. The research process facilitated learning amongst and between networks and introduced new processes, such as scaling methodologies and using technological tools for data management. This has resulted in greater coverage and expansion of the UL model and collaboration with government authorities to develop a communication strategy and raise awareness about the importance of reading for young children.

For example, the project trained community stakeholders in Ghana to strengthen their capacity to provide continuous support for reading clubs and other UL activities. Teachers received coaching and mentoring support, enabling them to improve their pedagogical skills and better position them to support the intervention. The project also conducted extensive training of DTST members on the UL model and GESI, with the expectation that they will cascade their learning to at least 630 teachers in their respective areas.

In Nicaragua, various trainings were conducted, including reading animation workshops, certification in the management of MEQA clubs, webinars on UL model strategies and methodology, and the use and management of early reading measurement tools. Research results have been used to inform these trainings to address gaps in the quality of UL implementation. The project also introduced new processes and technologies to improve data management and scaling methodologies, as well as fostered collaboration with government authorities to expand coverage and raise awareness about the importance of young children's reading.

Related to engagement meetings: ULLN consortium partners conducted engagement meetings with government stakeholders and other Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) partners in the project's implementation regions. These meetings aimed to share knowledge, exchange experiences, and strengthen collaborations toward achieving the project's objectives. One notable meeting was the second GPE KIX Technical Committee Meeting on TPD@Scale models in Ghana, organized by World Reader, to address the problem of teacher practices in early-grade digital reading instruction. At this meeting, WV Ghana showcased its project models, including Unlock Literacy and its adaptability as a course module to

support the TPD. Adopting these models requires registration with the National Teacher Council (NTC) and added as a course that teachers can access to gain TPD points for licensing and promotions. WV Ghana will continue to engage with the Ministry to gain approval for this course module and ensure that UL is included.

In Nicaragua, the ULLN team (OISE, FOSDEH, and WV Nicaragua) participated in the ROSIE research project, including the ROSIE conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2022. This involvement aimed to provide ULLN research results related to researching the scaling of the innovation of reading camps, particularly in complex contexts. This collaboration highlights the project's commitment to learning and collaboration toward achieving its objectives.

In Honduras, the ULLN team participated various key engagement meetings in 2022. For example, the ULLN team participated in a KIX workshop for KIX projects to learn about initiatives within this ecosystem. FOSDEH and WVH met with GPE, Foro Dakar and the Education Out Loud (EOL) initiative to share experiences and learn what each organization was doing within the framework of various KIX projects. FOSDEH and WVH also met Canadian Embassy officials in Honduras, to share details of the ULLN project and its relationship with KIX-IDRC.

Related to UL model implementation quality: To strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the UL project model and reading camp implementation, WV implemented a robust monitoring and evaluation system to monitor the quality of conditions related to attendance, physical space, reading materials, and reading camp facilitators' activities, including the application of the UL methodology. The Measuring Education Quality Achieved (MEQA) dashboard is a tool that provides a detailed analysis of instructional issues, enabling community volunteers to receive tailor-made support to strengthen the quality of the reading camps. MEQA data was used to complement the overall research. While WV Ghana was already using MEQA, WV Honduras and WV Nicaragua introduced its use in Nicaragua and Honduras through this project, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the program's impact. WV Honduras and WV Nicaragua trained learning networks, including community and faith leaders, parents, young people, and teachers, on the Unlock Literacy model and MEQA tool, including issues related to specific learning difficulties, such as how to address language difficulties in the classroom, and GESI.

Related to knowledge mobilization: Through a robust and tailored Knowledge Mobilization strategy, ULLN consortium partners shared findings widely to inform Ministry of Education policies and actions, World Vision programming, and other organizations conducting similar literacy programs for young learners. The project aimed to support the collective awareness of multiple stakeholder and network groups that implemented the UL methodology for improving students' literacy outcomes, with primary stakeholders including teachers, reading camp facilitators and volunteers, girls and boys in- and out-of-school, school administrative leaders, government officials, community volunteers, community and church leaders, and parents.

Research results were disseminated in Honduras through learning networks, local educational authorities, and the Educational Research and Innovation Center for Latin America and the Caribbean (SUMMA)/KIX Latin America. As a research laboratory for Latin America, SUMMA facilitated knowledge-sharing and collaborations with a broad audience of researchers and practitioners, thus supporting WV and FOSDEH to contribute to developing evidence-based practices in education. SUMMA's virtual forums were an effective platform for knowledge mobilization, providing a space for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to share their experiences and perspectives on key topics related to education. These virtual forums have covered issues such as educational challenges in times of crisis, promoting educational

innovation in LAC, and gender equality in public education. SUMMA's knowledge mobilization efforts in Honduras and Nicaragua have been instrumental in disseminating research on educational innovations and providing a theoretical framework for analyzing the context in which ULLN research was conducted.

The project also participated in the GPE KIX Continental Research Symposium in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, organized by the KIX Africa 19 and 21 Hubs. The symposium was to share recent and emerging national research, innovations, and good practices in raising learning outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa. It also promoted continental learning and discussion between national policy actors, researchers, and practitioners within and between the KIX Africa 19 and 21 Hubs. The project (represented by the University of Ghana) presented a paper on UL reading camps in Ghana.

These dissemination efforts were vital in generating interest among stakeholders across the three countries in adopting and scaling the UL model and ensuring that the project's findings had a broader impact on learning outcomes.

1.3 Design and Implementation

Research methods and analytical techniques: OISE used a collaborative, hands-on approach to facilitate the three research teams (FOSDEH, OISE, and UGhana) to conduct Phase 1 and Phase 2 research detailed in the research plan. ULLN researchers worked with WV partners in Canada, Ghana, Honduras, and Nicaragua during these activities to share ideas and processes to strengthen the research and UL implementation and build capacities for more adaptive researchers and implementers.

Following the research plan, researchers collected qualitative data in two phases of data collection from key stakeholders, such as reading camp facilitators, girls and boys who attend the reading camps, mothers and fathers who send their children to reading camps, Parent-Teacher Associations, faith leaders, teachers, head teachers members, Traditional Authority leaders in Ghana, Ministry of Education officials (at national, regional and local levels), local government officials and World Vision staff (at national, regional and local levels). Data was collected using Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews and Reading Camp observations. Researchers also collected data by writing field notes. (Researchers in Nicaragua received the required MINED approval of the data collection tools to collect data from MINED officials (including teachers and school directors) in May 2022. Because of this delay, only one round of data collection occurred for this group.

FOSEDH and UGhana, with guidance from OISE, analyzed the data using inductive coding, allowing codes and categories to emerge through reading and interpreting the data in an exploratory manner. Researchers used the comparative method to iterate between open coding when they break textual data into discrete parts and axial coding when they make connections between codes until they can map the emerging themes and their relationships. FOSDEH used NVivo qualitative data analysis software to analyze their data, whereas UGhana analyzed the data manually.

Findings from each of the three countries in this project provided evidence of networks of key stakeholders supporting community-based literacy activities for early-grade children through reading camps (known as reading clubs in Nicaragua) outside of school hours. These networks include many of the same key stakeholders in each country, such as children, parents, volunteers who serve as reading camp facilitators, faith leaders, Parent Teacher Associations/School Management Committees, local government officials, community leaders, Ministry of Education officials and World Vision staff. There are also distinctions in stakeholder networks due to the context of the communities. For example, each

community in Ghana has a Traditional Authority that plays an important part in this network and the community's life.

At the time of this project, each country was at a different stage of implementing reading camps. WV Ghana began implementing reading camps in 2017, and research findings from the 20 rural community sites show strong, well-established, and effective stakeholder networks. WV Nicaragua began implementing reading camps (known as "reading clubs") in 2019, and research findings provide evidence of established effective stakeholder networks in the ten research sites. WV Honduras began implementing reading camps in 2021 after being delayed by a long period of school closures and required isolation due to Covid 19. By Phase 2 data collection in Honduras, reading camps observed had been running for one year or more, and research findings illustrate how they were becoming well-established.

Scaling the impact: The project enhanced the knowledge of critical stakeholders in data collection, adaptive systems, learning networks, teacher professional development at scale, and literacy programming. The cross-country comparative project report presents factors on the implementation and perception of participants on the impact and changes derived from the reading camps. Using the findings from the individual country research reports, the 'scaling for impact' process for the reading camps occurred in two ways: internally and externally.

Internally, the ULLN project strengthened the capacities of WV's Education program staff, including community development facilitators and area program managers, for implementing the UL model. This has allowed for greater coverage and expansion in the population served, particularly in Honduras and Nicaragua. UL in Ghana is more mature, and the project helped consolidate the progress achieved over the years. Externally, regarding community-level stakeholders/actors, the project results helped improve the delivery of the UL model, particularly the reading camps. Reflections on findings have contributed to strengthening what is happening, and addressing issues as they arise in collaboration with their stakeholder counterparts, who are directly and indirectly involved in reading camps at all levels (locally, regionally, and nationally).

Regarding the system-level stakeholder, the project worked closely with government authorities. In Honduras, the project coordinated with two secretariats (the Secretariat of Education – SEDUC, and the Secretariat of Arts, Culture and People's Patrimony - SECAPPH). With central and local SEDUC authorities, the project developed a communication strategy that will hopefully expand the coverage and implementation of the UL model. This strategy includes a community action component aimed at parents to raise awareness about the importance of reading and the implementation of reading camps. With SECAPPH, the project is working on actions to strengthen reading and writing through didactic strategies for the creation of stories and narratives that promote creativity, as well as the articulation of art and culture in childhood.

In Ghana, the project engaged with the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NaCCA) with ongoing discussions on including some UL model aspects during the upcoming national curriculum review. Findings from the research led to an active dialogue with the Colleges of Education and a group of 5 public universities to influence the scaling-up process for teacher professional development. The colleges and universities reflected on the need to slightly adjust their current curriculum to align better with the school curriculum. The colleges also agreed to collate stories annually from their students for communities to use in material creation for the UL model (stories for book banks). Additionally, the Ghana team was invited by the Complementary Education Agency (CEA), the unit under the MoE responsible for all out-of-school education programs, to make inputs into the agency's new guidelines and curriculum. Research

findings were also shared with the Ghana Education Service (GES), including policy changes recommended by different stakeholders. The Director General promised to discuss them with the Minister of Education to consider some of these policy changes.

In Nicaragua, the teachers and principals interact at the community level and support reading camps. This same support is also true at the Municipal and National level. Still, the socio-political situation makes pushing for formal policy changes, reform, or adjustment in practices or behaviour more challenging.

You can read more [here](#) on *Scaling for Impact* knowledge generated by the project including mobilization of stakeholders and capacity-strengthening strategies to influence the potential scale-up of the UL community action component. The paper also highlights examples of promising signs of uptake by stakeholders and governments.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI): GESI was central to the overall research project and explored the impact of gender norms and societal beliefs on the participation of children (girls and boys) and adults (women and men) in reading camps in each country. The purpose of this exploration was to deepen the gender analysis of the data beyond simply ensuring gender parity (equal numbers of girls and boys attending reading camps or equal numbers of female and male reading camp facilitators) but also to explore how gender norms and widely-held societal beliefs and practices can affect the ways and extent to which children (girls and boys) and adults (women and men) are involved (or not involved) in reading camps.

While each country has a distinct context with differing gender norms, comparing findings reveals how girls' household responsibilities can affect girls' free time to participate in activities such as the reading camps. For example, in Ghana, boys are more likely than girls to have free time outside of school hours to participate in activities such as reading camps. In some cases, boys' responsibilities to help the family through paid work can affect boys' ability to participate in reading camp activities. Examples of "boy's work" types include seasonal agricultural work in all three countries, harvesting coffee in Honduras and Nicaragua, and fishing in island communities in Ghana. When exploring gender dimensions related to reading camp facilitators, women in Honduras and Nicaragua were far more likely to volunteer in this role when compared to men. This was largely attributed to the fact that men in these countries work away from home to earn money for their families. In contrast, women are responsible for household responsibilities, including caring for the children, according to the common gender roles and gender norms in these communities.

In Honduras, the ULLN project, through a consultant, conducted a GESI assessment to provide qualitative information on the context, which examined gender-based inequalities and inequities and the social, cultural, and economic barriers faced by various groups of girls and boys to achieve better literacy results. In-person conferences were held to disseminate the GESI assessment findings with local educational authorities, learning networks, WV leadership and representatives of municipal offices to sensitize key stakeholders (teachers, municipal directors and social networks) of learning on the importance of providing equal opportunities for girls and boys. Through virtual conversations, the GESI assessment findings were shared with representatives of IDRC and other KIX projects in Honduras to exchange experiences.

Capacity strengthening: Capacity strengthening of relevant stakeholders was crucial to ensure the sustainability and impact of the Unlock Literacy Learning Network (ULLN) model.

In Honduras and Nicaragua, the capacity-strengthening activities targeted critical stakeholders such as community and faith leaders, parents, agents of change, youth, teachers, and directors of educational centers. Activities included understanding the ULLN model, quality assurance monitoring using the MEQA framework, and Specific Learning Difficulties (DEA) and GESI issues. Through these activities, stakeholders could use the ULLN model to support literacy initiatives in their communities, which helped improve children's literacy outcomes.

In Ghana, the capacity-strengthening activities targeted District Teacher Support Team (DTST) members to build their capacity for qualitative research and understand better the UL model, including reading camps. Similarly, the Colleges of Education participated in intensive training on the UL model and have agreed to incorporate aspects of it in their teaching curriculum. This will help with our scaling the impact efforts.

In 2021 OISE conducted a GESI workshop for ULLN researchers across all three countries. The workshop aimed to ensure all researchers had a shared understanding of key gender concepts related to GESI in education. They were also trained on DFID's Educational Marginalization Framework and understood the importance of using a GESI lens throughout all research processes.

OISE also trained the FOSDEH researchers in Nicaragua and Honduras on using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The training sessions included theoretical and practical components, enabling researchers to comprehensively understand the software's capabilities.

Knowledge mobilization: The project team developed a Knowledge Management, Exchange, and Translation (KMET) strategy to guide and capture the dissemination process across the different country contexts. KM processes within the project were organized at the community, country, and global levels.

At a community level, the consortium KM strategy acknowledges that empowering communities through knowledge mobilization can positively impact literacy rates and the community's overall development. Parallel to the data collection process, we have also presented the results of our research in an engaging and accessible way. This was done through embedding phased community-friendly result socialization and validation meetings with the key UL implementers (faith leaders, mothers, caregivers, members of the board and water boards, children, teachers, and principals) as part of the data collection. Data shared with them was limited to findings related to the community level and the impact of their efforts in supporting the UL model.

The importance of community involvement was recognized *at the country level,* where a series of capacity-building workshops for community volunteers was developed in all three countries. Other tools and products were developed to allow partners to navigate the complexities of their local contexts and build trust and relationships with different stakeholders.

- Honduras - WVH and FOSDEH jointly developed a mobilization and scaling plan to disseminate research results through newsletters, summaries, newspaper articles, videos, graphic murals, theatrical artistic presentations, forums, and a symposium with key authors for their involvement in decision-making spaces. These efforts motivated communities to continue implementing the model; government authorities committed to joint actions with WV to promote a strategy to strengthen reading activities in girls and boys.

- Nicaragua **-** different sessions were held to communicate the research results with community leaders, including promoters of the reading clubs. Also, space was held between members of FOSDEH, WVN and MoE/MINED representatives to discuss the report's findings.

- Ghana - four major dissemination forums were carried out in Accra, Ho, and Koforidua, where key stakeholders, policymakers, donor agencies, academic and civil society partners from the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NaCCA), universities, NGOs, volunteers, faith leaders, and WVG staff were present. Additionally, the UL model's dissemination was done at community, district, regional, and national levels, targeting policymakers, partners, donors, traditional leaders, local government authorities, camp facilitators, parents, teachers, headteachers, DTST, representatives of teacher unions, regional directors of education, and other government bodies. The project adopted new dissemination strategies in the second phase to reach more people and tailor information to specific audiences.

At a global level, and to widen access to the research findings, the consortium organized a series of virtual interactive webinars involving practitioner roundtable discussions, seminars and brown bag sessions tailored to various groups, i.e. academia, development practitioners and WV global education practitioners (ULLN engagement meetings).

Consolidation meetings: The consortium partners conducted a series of in-person consolidation workshops in Ghana, Nicaragua, and Honduras in August and September 2022. These workshops included scaling activities and community field visits, providing consortium partners with sustained engagement and learning opportunities to strengthen their work. All consortium partners participated in the first workshop in Ghana on August 29th, 2022. During this workshop, OISE conducted a series of "scaling for impact" activities to consolidate thinking on UL reading camps across diverse contexts and to enrich ULLN's KMET plans and final reports. These activities were informed by IDRC's and Brookings Institution's scaling materials and tools. During the workshop, country teams mapped the scaling system, identified factors that enable and limit the effectiveness of reading camps, and developed a Scaling Action Plan that incorporated each country's KMET plan. WVG also facilitated field visits to two diverse communities to enable consortium partners to have first-hand experiences of reading camp spaces, talking with community members involved in reading camp activities and observing reading camps in action.

The second and third consolidation workshops were follow-up workshops to share and deepen learnings from Ghana with the Honduras and Nicaragua country teams. These workshops also included scaling discussions, activities, and field visits to two diverse communities.

The rich discussions and field visits during these consolidation workshops have enabled consortium partners to deepen their shared understanding of "scaling for impact" and strengthened the ULLN work. The aim is to create a scalable strategy to positively impact more children through knowledge dissemination activities with decision-making authorities. Research findings were shared at an exchange event for ULLN partners in Ghana. Different levels in the scaling of educational innovation, specifically in "reading camps," and how the community network functions in literacy processes were identified. These activities and discussions are critical to inform current and future scaling efforts and to improve the effectiveness of reading camps in improving WV Unlock Literacy programming.

1.4 Management

The project encountered some project management issues. Early in the project, implementation agreements between partners took longer than expected to be finalized, particularly the agreement between WV Canada and OISE due to internal regulations and administrative controls. Once the agreement was signed, things went smoothly.

Another issue was related to the COVID-19 pandemic, national elections in the three countries, and climate-related disasters in Honduras and Nicaragua. All these factors, particularly in year 1 and first half of year 2, impacted our ability to meet scheduled timelines and deadlines. However, with a short no-cost extension, the project ensured that none of that derailed the project timeline.

Regarding human resources, in Ghana, two research assistants resigned. The team quickly remedied the situation with minimal impact on the project. In Nicaragua, it was difficult in Nicaragua to hire support personnel for data collection at the community level. The new strict government control mechanisms in Nicaragua over NGOs and CSOs also impacted some activities in this country, mainly slowing down the processes due to approvals required for community work and interactions with the MoE. New government financial regulations also required more time for grant disbursement, including transferring funds from WV Nicaragua to FOSDEH.

Finally, although each project consortium's members benefited from ongoing, additional time (outside regular team meetings) for specific project learning and project management support, one challenge was the COVID-19 restrictions for face-to-face meetings /working sessions. Electronic communications and virtual meetings were opportunities to coordinate, discuss plans, and get closer, but it couldn't replace being together for deeper discussion and experiential learning. The project was only able to organize in year 3 field visits for different quality and depth of exposure and help understand contexts and issues, including strengths and challenges. Our consortium members articulated the added value of connecting in person to align understanding, clarify issues (including proper communication protocols) and receive support outside their immediate teams.

SECTION 2: PROJECT OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

2.1 Knowledge generation

The research explored community actors and networks in the three countries (Ghana, Honduras, and Nicaragua) and identified how they could be enabled and strengthened to adapt the implementation of the reading camps component of the Unlock Literacy model, depending on their context. The "scaling for impact" process was also explored in this study, focusing on how to expand or deepen the impact by spreading ideas, approaches, and/or underlying principles that lead to improved children's literacy learning through community-based literacy activities (namely reading camps).

This required identifying processes and practices that contribute to positive outcomes or impact and then focusing on "scaling up" those processes and practices over time. For this research, this meant identifying and understanding what is working well (factors that enable effective reading camps) and what the challenges are (factors that limit or hinder the effectiveness of reading camps) at different stages of implementation. The following are key factors identified through this study,

Key enabling factors	Key Hindering factors
• Committed actions of multiple key actors within community networks who support reading camps. • Flexibility to adapt the reading camp model to the local context, building on existing systems, structures, and relationships. • Implementing reading camp activities that complement the national curriculum. • Providing young children with learning opportunities in safe spaces outside of formal schooling • Key stakeholders perceiving benefits of reading camps.	• Covid-19. • Hurricanes (in Honduras and Nicaragua). • Changes in personnel (Reading Camp facilitators, government officials). • Children's paid and unpaid work (within and outside the household). • Location of the reading camp space. • Elements that require funding (provision of training, reading materials, volunteer incentives, ongoing support).

While these factors play out differently in different communities, they are all present in all three countries' research reports. The research sought to contribute to discussions on "scaling for impact" by drawing on findings from this study across the three countries, not only within distinct contexts but also at different stages of implementation of reading camps. Scaling, at the earliest implementation stage, focuses on introducing and establishing reading camps (as the innovation being studied in this case.) Once the reading camps are established, implementers need to provide ongoing support in differing forms (such as training, materials, monitoring, etc.) to strengthen what is happening, as well as address issues as they arise in collaboration with their stakeholder counterparts, who are directly and indirectly involved in reading camps at all levels (local, regional and national).

While the focus of implementers centers on meeting the project objectives and deliverables, implementers should also be thinking about ways to engage key stakeholders at all levels in discussions that enable the transition from an implementer-supported innovation to one that local stakeholders completely own without any support from the implementers. This is mainly because the UL model gives collective responsibilities to each person involved in the child's development: the parents, the school, the religious bodies and the community as a whole, with each playing their part in the upbringing and development of the child.

Ultimately, the local stakeholders decide if an innovation (or elements of an innovation) should be taken up, including how they will find the resources (in terms of human resources, materials, spaces, etc.) to be able to do so. As such, the researchers noted that WV's role as the implementer is still instrumental in facilitating this transition in many ways: by collecting and sharing information on the strengths and challenges of implementing the innovation, by sharing details on the costs (monetary and in-kind) of implementing the innovation, etc. Thus, the innovation transition should move from implementer-led to fully stakeholder-led (without implementer support) at the end of a project. Integrating scaling considerations throughout the stages of implementation may well strengthen the process of transferring full ownership of a proven innovation (such as WV UL reading camps) out of the hands of the implementers and fully into the hands of the key stakeholders.

From the educational sector, the outstanding role that educational actors have played in supporting communities in the teaching processes promoted by the reading camps is also important. The support of the authorities, directors and teachers is essential and valuable for the didactic orientation. These community networks are a bridge and guarantors that literacy programs last over time and adapt to changes because they know the reality and prevailing context.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) was a critical cross-cutting inquiry in our research and was explored quantitatively and qualitatively. A cross-country analysis of the key findings from each country reveals how girls' household responsibilities can affect girls' free time to participate in activities such as reading camps. For example, in Ghana, boys are more likely than girls to have free time outside of school hours to participate in activities such as reading camps. In some cases, boys' responsibilities to help the family through paid work can affect boys' ability to participate in reading camp activities. Examples of "boy's work" types include seasonal agricultural work in all three countries, harvesting coffee in Honduras and Nicaragua, and fishing in island communities in Ghana. When exploring gender dimensions related to reading camp facilitators, women in Honduras and Nicaragua were far more likely to volunteer in this role when compared to men. This was largely attributed to the fact that men in these countries work away from home to earn money for their families. In contrast, women are responsible for household responsibilities, including caring for the children, according to the common gender roles and gender norms in these communities.

2.2 Capacity strengthening

The project conducted more than 28 capacity-strengthening events in the three countries. Total attendance surpassed 2,500, including more than 1,970 women.

In Ghana, where the UL model has been implemented for more than five years (longer than in Nicaragua and Honduras), capacity strengthening was aimed mainly at the district level of the Ministry of Education. The project strengthened the capacity of 50 staff from the Ghana Education Service (GES) in qualitative research and data gathering who later supported data collection processes. Furthermore, Training of Trainer's (TOT) workshops were held for new and old 46 DTST members on the UL Model, who are cascading the training to teachers in their various districts. For 200 community members and parents, WV Ghana leveraged the dissemination of research findings at the community level, to encourage them to schedule house chores in ways that do not affect children's attendance and participation in reading camps.

A training workshop strengthened the capacity of tutors from selected Colleges of Education on the UL model for them to start implementing in their education centers. The one-week training took participants through the entire project model and facilitation.

In Honduras, where the UL implementation is more recent (less than 2 years), trainings were targeted to learning networks made up of community and faith leaders, teachers, school principals, parents, and young people on how to implement the model, administration and use the MEQA tool as well as specific learning difficulties. A total of 1,374 participants (1,154 women and 220 men) from various communities in the country were reached. Additionally, because the UL was implemented in schools in Honduras, trainings were also conducted for 201 teachers (151 women and 50 men). 1,621 participants (1,348 women and 273 men) including 46 community leaders (43 women and 3 men) were also reached as part of the trainings on integrating GESI approaches, which aimed at addressing challenging issues to teachers and facilitators such as stereotypes, gender roles and social inclusion.

All capacity-strengthening actions have resulted in the participation of 4,287 children (2,213 girls and 2,074 boys) in the reading camps, 767 members of community networks (669 women and 98 men) and 174 teachers (142 women and 32 men) promoting activities to improve reading skills in the most vulnerable children. WV Honduras,

WV Honduras, in coordination with the Secretary of Education (SEDUC) and the Secretary of Cultures, the Arts and heritage of the Peoples of Honduras (SECAPPH), launched the CECI (*Compartiendo Experiencias Educativas Comunitarias e Innovadoras*) campaign to strengthen literacy through didactic strategies for the local creation of children literature/reading materials.

In Nicaragua, training sessions were also provided to community volunteers (21 women and 6 men), and 22 reading promoters (15 women and 7 men), in using the MEQA monitoring tool, with further follow-up trainings to coach them on how best to use the data generated by the process and overall research to inform better programming and improve the quality of reading camps. Consequently, discussions and learnings from the MEQA data noted that there were gaps in certain areas, such as print-rich environment and story time with quality. WV addressed these gaps by training 22 reading club promoters (14 women and 8 men) on ways to improve access to reading materials and hosting a workshop on theatre techniques for community promoters of reading clubs, which 26 women and 8 men attended. The workshop introduced a new approach to teaching children to read effectively. This workshop on reading animation with theatre techniques was also tailored to teachers from 1st to 3rd grade and multigrade schools, with a total of 175 attendees, including 139 women and 36 men.

Additionally, to augment understanding of the national assessments such as the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) test and how to apply the data to strengthen the contribution of reading camps to improved literacy. Although the MoE staff did not participate in the training, they supported and authorized the application of the tests in the schools. This training and the subsequent data collection gave the community volunteers leadership, participation, and a sense of empowerment that contributes to the sustainability of the actions. Participants collected information about the reading levels of girls and boys, learned about the situation, and became more engaged in finding solutions.

2.3 Knowledge mobilization

The project conducted more than 25 Knowledge Mobilization events in the three countries. More than 1,350 people attended these different events. In addition, project representatives participated in international events organized by the KIX Hubs. In the case of the LAC Hub, the project shared findings as part of a panel at the 2nd KIX LAC International Conference (virtual). In the case of the Africa 19 Hub, the project participated in the KIX Research Symposium (Reimagining education to raise learning outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa) in Ethiopia. The symposium was a platform for the ULLN project to share its findings with other grantees across Africa and learn from them.

While there are certainly challenges associated with measuring the long-term impact of knowledge mobilization efforts on government policies and practices, there are also some promising signs of progress in potential knowledge uptake because of our knowledge mobilization activities.

In Ghana, the project conducted 11 knowledge mobilization activities. These knowledge mobilization activities were carried out through four workshops (120 participants), four meetings (210 participants), and three community gatherings (600 participants).

The meetings were high-level breakfast sessions meant to share research findings, explore areas of collaboration with government agencies, and propose policy changes such as a language policy for instruction in schools at the basic level. The Ghana team was invited by the Complementary Education Agency (CEA), the unit under the MoE responsible for all out-of-school education programs, to make inputs into the agency's new guidelines and curriculum. Research findings were also shared with the Ghana Education Service (GES), including policy changes recommended by different stakeholders. The Director General promised to discuss them with the Minister of Education to consider some of these policy changes. Additionally, and as part of a public lecture by the St. Teresa's College of Education to mark International Mother Language Day on the theme "Multilingual education- a necessity to transform education in a multilingual world," the ULLN research was cited as part of researchers backing the need for a multilingual approach to education, through the use of the mother tongue as the first approach to helping children in their initial literacy journey before moving them to acquire a second language

The workshops were an opportunity to share findings and a space to introduce the UL model to those new to the innovation, such as Principals of Colleges of Education and their tutors. This dissemination method yielded good results, particularly because most of the colleges present wanted to collaborate with communities and World Vision in developing materials for children. The colleges agreed to collate stories annually from their students for communities to use in material creation for the UL model (stories for book banks).

This space to share the research findings with the Universities managing the Colleges of Education (namely, the University of Science and Technology, Cape Coast University, University of Education Winneba, University of Ghana, and University of Development Studies) was also to influence the scaling-up process for teacher professional development. Based on the discussions, the colleges and universities reflected on the need to adjust their current curriculum slightly to align better with the school curriculum. The project also engaged with the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NaCCA) with ongoing discussions on including some UL model aspects during the upcoming national curriculum review.

Last, but not least, the community gathering was a platform to share and discuss findings and renew community commitment and support for the UL project model, including promoting ownership of the reading clubs. This was seen when some religious bodies pledged their support to the reading club, through the provision of space and some incentives for the facilitators, during the community-level dissemination.

Ghana will also actively participate next September in the 3rd International Conference on Education Research for Development in Africa (ICERDA) at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

In Honduras, as part of the mobilization of knowledge, the key findings of ULLN research have been socialized with local, national, and international actors, and the gender and social inclusion assessment with educational authorities, learning networks, local government authorities, WV Honduras leaders, and the FOSDEH team.

Based on the research finding, WV Honduras has integrated the implementation of the model as part of the country's national strategy and coordinated with state secretaries to promote the scaling of the model. The project has promoted the exchange of learning with other KIX-GPE research projects, which has generated new knowledge and strategies for the implementers and research teams.

With all the knowledge mobilization activities, WV Honduras has had early results to scale up the model, such as alliances with government authorities (Secretary of Education SEDUC, and Secretary of Culture, Arts, & Patrimony SECAPPH) and academia such as the Francisco Morazán National Pedagogical University.

Based on the research finding and discussions, WV Honduras has coordinated with SEDUC and SECAPPH to promote the scaling of the UL model. As a result, WV Honduras and these two state secretaries launched the CECI (*Compartiendo Experiencias Educativas Comunitarias e Innovadoras*) campaign to strengthen literacy through didactic strategies for the local development of children literature/reading materials. This communication strategy will hopefully expand the coverage and implementation of the UL model. This strategy includes a community action component aimed at parents to raise awareness about the importance of reading and the implementation of reading camps. The project is working on actions to strengthen reading and writing through didactic strategies for the creation of stories and narratives that promote creativity, as well as the articulation of art and culture in childhood.

In addition, in part because of the ULLN research and subsequent discussions with other countries, World Vision has partnered with the University of Monterrey (Mexico) to launch a digital course on *Comprehensive Reading Competence* that is expected to be offered to 800 teachers and administrators from Latin America and the Caribbean (Honduras, El Salvador, Peru, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic and Bolivia. WV Honduras will continue to carry out more actions in the future.

In Nicaragua, five knowledge mobilization events were aimed at community volunteers, reading promoters, and faith leaders. Research findings were shared, focusing on the enabling and hindering factors in implementing the UL model, discussing challenges, and highlighting their contribution to improving children's reading skills. These events were very useful because different groups provided pertinent feedback as recommendations for the report. The events also led to the development of improvement plans that community members agreed to implement.

Teachers and principals interact at the community level and support reading camps. This same support is also true at the Municipal and National level. Still, the socio-political situation makes pushing for formal policy changes, reform, or adjustment in practices or behaviour more challenging.

In January 2023, to mark the end of the project, the project organized a virtual knowledge mobilization event divided into different sessions over three days. The purpose was to bring together Canadian like-minded education practitioners, academia, and WV international education community to discuss several themes, issues and interventions related to improving the literacy of marginalized boys and girls.

The event featured a short overview of Unlock Literacy model, and findings and recommendations from the research reports was shared while also discussing how Unlock Literacy (UL) community networks from Ghana, Nicaragua and Honduras can be scaled and adapted to potentially fit similar contexts and countries.

There were roundtable discussions that discussed some of the key issues in the literacy of vulnerable girls and boys in marginalized contexts globally. Themes such as the role of community networks in literacy development in fragile contexts, gender and social inclusion in community-based literacy projects, school vs community, scaling community-based education interventions for impact and many others were discussed. It was an opportunity for participants to get together in an informal setting for an open and

ongoing discussion to collaboratively address and shape ideas to strengthen foundational literacy programming in fragile and vulnerable contexts.

The event concluded with a virtual seminar focused on the unique collaboration of researchers and implementers in this project, how the research was conducted, and how each country team was using the key findings from these three distinct contexts at different stages of implementation not only to inform current programming but also to inform how community-based literacy activities can be implemented in similar contexts to reach more children.

SECTION 3: INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons

One lesson learned from the project is allocating more time for disseminating, exchanging, and learning from research results. Although the project had a solid knowledge mobilization plan of action, many activities require a high dose of relational, iterative, and context-sensitive processes of moving knowledge to action.

Our project faced many factors or challenges (COVID and its restrictions, natural disasters, country-specific political processes, and changes in government authorities) that delayed project implementation. In this context, the project adapted and was able to catch up and get on track with the IDRC approval of a five-month no-cost extension. The project knowledge dissemination plan was a rich validation process, sharing findings at different levels, deeply reflecting on realities, and developing improvement or action plans. At the community level and in districts, it was easier to understand the effect of disseminating and how the knowledge was being applied. However, at the national level and with other organizations supporting education, more time is needed to truly see how the research contributes to scaling the innovation and strengthening the efforts to improve the education system.

Another lesson learned is the analysis of the stakeholders or actors. This was essential as an integrated tool throughout the project cycle helped assess the links of how best to influence educational innovation to scale. According to the experiences lived in the implementation, we also confirmed that there are actors that can change and bring consequences in the delay of programmed processes. For example, in Nicaragua, the death of the National Director of Primary Education, with whom actions were already approved and ready to execute, making it necessary to start from scratch and establish contact with the new interim Director. The mapping served to identify the actors, their roles, functions, and levels as decision-makers. It also served to analyze what action to take before the movement or change of one of them, and what actions or strategies to follow.

An additional lesson learned was the need, given the opportunity, to have more in-person sense-making meetings to dive deeper into the progress and impact of the project as it evolved over time. The sense-making session was a new concept and a very useful tool for tracking the progress and gaps of the project. The final cross-country comparative paper came in at the very late stage of the project, and we had limited opportunities to widely share, discuss, and analyze it to reflect on how education innovation at different stages and contexts had similarities and limitations, and the potential reasons behind it.

Finally, another lesson that stood out was the working relationships with the Ministry of Education and other government authorities, the need to actively involve them from the beginning, the importance of

formal agreements, and ensuring a continuous relationship, even when faced with significant changes in their structures. Anticipating situations typical of the socio-political context of some countries is the basis for knowing what position and role an organization can play and how it should relate to government agencies, mainly the Ministry of Education.

Given that reading camps/clubs are rarely completely divorced from the formal school system, as typically there are linkages between the schools and reading camps, *scaling the reading camps* also includes actively promoting the involvement and endorsement of the MoE (national, regional, or municipal level) to actively support key UL principles and practices to ensure a higher degree of success and sustainability. There have been intentional efforts by the three countries to use the research findings to help achieve an improved balance of the appropriate relationship and support between the schools and reading camps.

The scaling process is a complex and time-consuming process involving different stages of implementation. The involvement of key stakeholders, including beneficiaries, is crucial in determining the final stages of scaling an innovation, with implementers providing support and guidance on adapting the innovation. The study highlighted several key factors that need to be considered to understand the implications of scaling reading camps across the three countries. First, decision-makers need to identify who is in the best position to identify the benefits and challenges of the innovation within a particular context. Second, qualitative and quantitative evidence needs to be collected, validated, and disseminated to help inform decision-makers at different levels of the system. Third, decision-makers need to use this evidence to decide what processes and practices related to reading camps should be scaled up and how they should be scaled up. Fourth, decision-makers need to define the process of identifying what aspects of the innovation will be scaled up, such as what "optimal scaling" looks like and when or in what ways it will happen. And fifth, "scaling for impact" requires direct and indirect costs, so decision-makers must determine which costs can be covered, by whom, and how.

Views and Insights

In Honduras, the team feels that the implementation of the project has been valuable because it has contributed to responding to challenges in the education system such as children falling behind in school due to the pandemic (closure of educational centers). Additionally, the social asset has improved learning networks, strengthening their capacities for community action. It was important for WV Honduras to keep working in national and international institutional networks and improve capacities as a team and strategic positioning.

The investment is justified since reflection and knowledge were generated for a better implementation of the innovation and betterment of the countries; the research findings are valuable input to help address educational gaps with scientific evidence. Considering there is a lack of investment in research in the country, this has been a great opportunity for the educational authorities, and the findings will serve as a resource to work in the different national territories. The generation of knowledge, capacity building and knowledge mobilization added enough value because the findings found will serve not only the organizations involved but also others that promote the issue of literacy, with contextualized evidence. However, to achieve a significant impact, more time (and funding) is required to carry out additional tailored knowledge mobilization activities to reach the desired scale and impact.

In Nicaragua, the team feels that the project generated knowledge and evidence to support the adaptation of the educational innovation (Unlock Literacy - UL) that has proven its effectiveness and

potential for scalability. According to the research findings, it can be said that this project has been of great value and importance to position the UL model, particularly the reading camps component, as highlighted by the key informants.

The community network members (or key actors in the implementation) perceive that the UL model improves the reading skills of girls and boys from first to third grade. It provided evidence on the functioning of reading camps/clubs as educational innovation and what areas need to be adjusted for quality and sustainability. Capacities were generated in the reading promoters, through workshops and the provision of guides as resources to support their educational work with children. Within World Vision, the technical education program resumed training on the UL model methodology, emphasizing community action and teacher training, and the exchange of knowledge and good practices among the countries in the consortium was promoted.

The time, effort and financing were well used, and the data obtained has been used to show the potential of innovation for its scaling, without ignoring the challenges that scaling implies. These results also highlighted the importance of including the cross-cutting theme of GESI in all educational innovation studies.

In its first and second phases, the Unlock Literacy Learning Network research provided evidence on how to strengthen collaborative networks of stakeholders that promote quality, sustainable and effective literacy considering the gender and inclusive dimension of girls and boys in the early grades (1-3) of school to address the low literacy levels in most vulnerable populations. This evidence is used to establish a general working theory on how community networks and the educational system collaborate to implement some of the main components of the UL model; reading assessments, community action, and reading materials (including those locally developed).

In Ghana, the team feels that one research's important value is having an academic institution validate activities and provide another layer of credibility by putting a scientific lens to the process. The research revealed the strong network of stakeholder support for the Unlock Literacy model and has given World Vision Ghana (WVG) milage recognition at the MoE as a strong organization implementing a mother language literacy approach in Ghana.

Even though there was no control group in this research, it was revealed that using the mother language approach to literacy has the potential of leapfrogging reading skills for children. Indeed, Ghana has a policy that supports the mother language approach, but for some reason, the policy has not been well implemented across Ghana. But where Unlock Literacy is being implemented, the policy has been implemented fully, and the returns have been enormous. As a result, WVG was appointed a technical member of the new Complementary Education Agency (CEA) operational plan. CEA is a body mandated to conduct activities in Ghana targeted at adult learning and out-of-school literacy programmes. Also, WVG was also nominated to serve as a technical member of the national education-in-emergencies (EIE) drafting committee. A body was set up to develop an EIE framework for Ghana to be used whenever an emergency such as covid.

Recommendations

The research finding led to discussions about potentially carrying out additional research in the future. The Ghana team, for example, recommends further research into the impact of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the early grade level. Though there is research across the globe that speaks

to the fact that the use of the mother tongue in communities is more effective for children's literacy learning, there has not been any research specifically carried out in Ghana. If this is done, it will provide strong evidence to policymakers to commit fully to the country's language policy.

According to key informants' perceptions in the process, the research findings show that the Unlock Literacy innovative model, particularly the reading camps, helps improve children's reading skills and behaviour. And there is evidence of this based on previous studies/evaluations in different countries, including Ghana. But the team from Nicaragua and Honduras recommends that it will help their scaling efforts if they produce their own local evidence to demonstrate the correlation between progress in learning and the reading camps/clubs. They feel opportune to research children's progress through a robust measurement study of the effect of reading camps on children's (girls and boys) reading skills, critical thinking, permanence in the school system and overall performance. Similarly, there is a recommendation to conduct a cost analysis of the type of funding needed to implement reading camps/clubs is important, including strengthening the capacities of reading promoters and parents.

A final recommendation related to potential future research has to do with the study of partnerships, translation of ideas, and development policies. Typically, it is widely accepted that partnerships between governments, NGOs, CSOs, and the private sector have the capability to address and solve development problems that would be much harder if each did it separately. And more recently, it is becoming increasingly popular to view these partnerships as a means to create, mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, and technology, which can help improve sustainable development impact by influencing the formulation of new policies, the reform of existing ones or making them more practical and functional.

However, these partnerships may need to change (modify and adapt) when discussions start in the process of translating learning into the development policy arena. Often, the policy-making context in which development partnerships operate is highly complex, and how the discussion of ideas and tools are used in development policies is shaped by this context which, at times, can generate potential tensions in the process. So, it is important to create the right partnership framework of shared purpose, responsibility, and accountability. Further research is needed on both policy translation processes and the development of partnerships. This includes how partnerships are set out to solve problems, how they aim to solve them, and how partnerships change as a policy idea travels into local development policies.

ENGLISH
ULLN Full Final Report Honduras
ULLN Summary Final Report Honduras
ULLN Full Final Report Nicaragua
ULLN Summary Final Report Nicaragua
ULLN Full Final Report Ghana
ULLN Cross-country comparative report
ULLN Scaling for Impact Paper
SPANISH
ULLN Reporte Final Completo Honduras
ULLN Reporte Resumen Final Honduras
ULLN Reporte Final Completo Nicaragua
ULLN Reporte Resumen Final Nicaragua
ULLN Reporte Final Completo Ghana
ULLN Análisis comparativo entre países
ULLN Reporte Final Nicaragua Componente Docente (not yet formally endorsed by the Ministry of Education (MINED)
ULLN Honduras – Estudio sobre Tendencias y Desafíos en la Educación Básica 2015-20
ULL Honduras – Diagnóstico rápido sobre género e inclusión social