



Yizani Sifunde

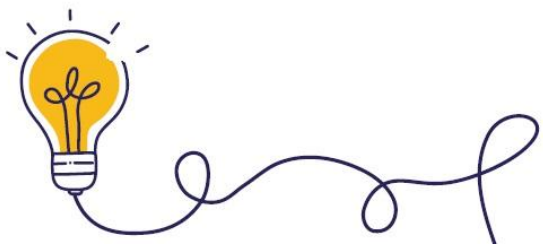
This project has been made possible through the **Liberty Community Trust**



Getting children 'on track' in the Eastern Cape (South Africa): the impact of Yizani Sifunde

Dorette Louw - Book Dash





Download the full evaluation report as well as the summary infographic from the Book Dash website: bookdash.org/yizani-sifunde

Mechanisms of collaboration



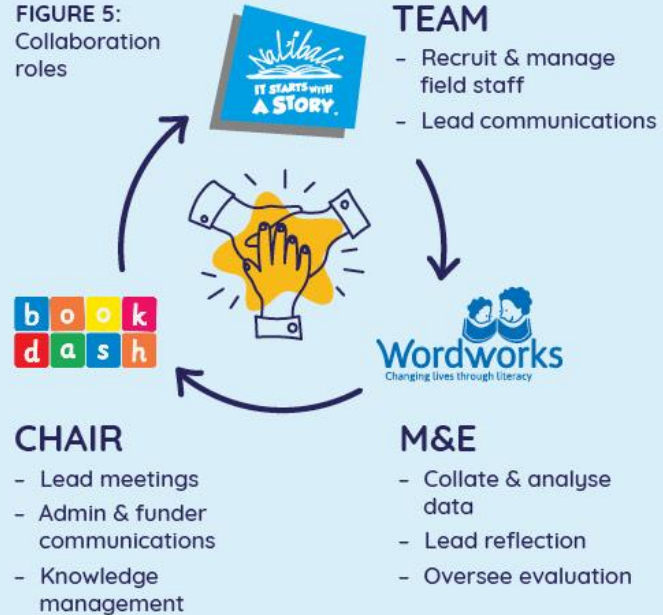
INSIGHT

Clear roles, reflective learning and trust enabled effective collaboration.

Factors that supported effective collaboration included:

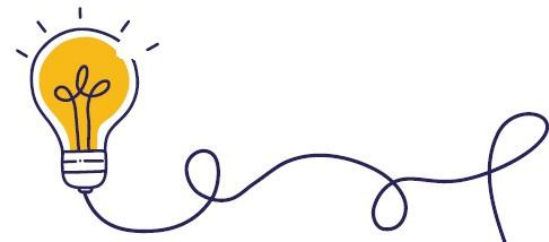
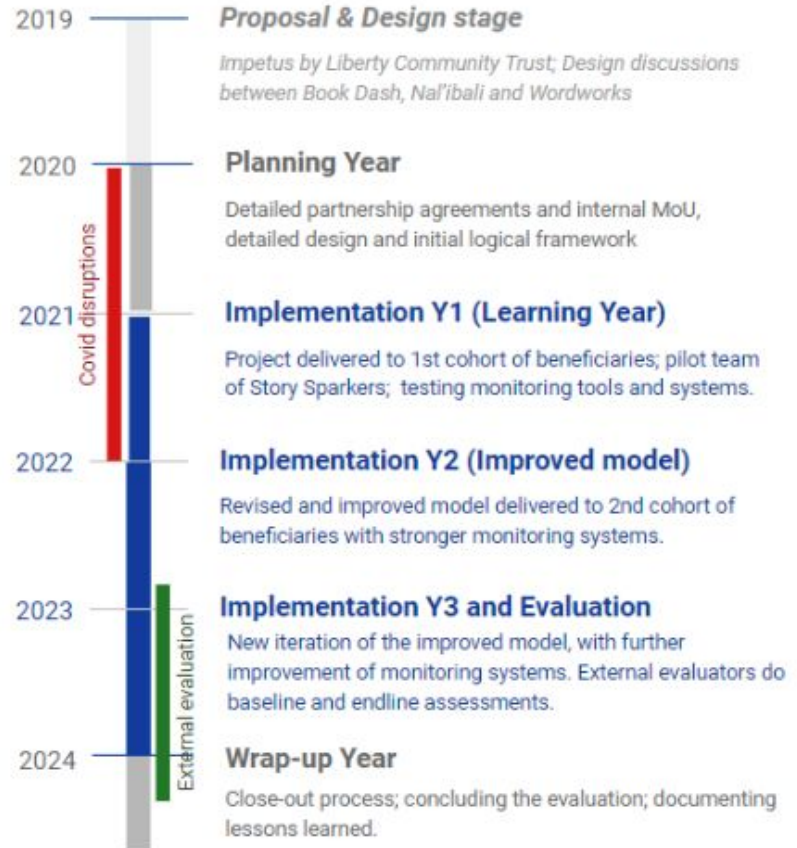
- ★ **Clearly defined collaboration roles**, separate from project roles.
- ★ **A robust monitoring and evaluation system**, paired with a reflective, learning-focused culture.
- ★ **A decision to monitor and evaluate the collaboration itself**, separate from project delivery, via an in-depth, structured reflection exercise at the end of Year 1.
- ★ **A separate budget for shared project costs** and unanticipated expenses.
- ★ **Hands-on systems and processes** to manage the collaboration, including monthly meetings, joint subcommittees and a Trello board.
- ★ **Trust and goodwill:** partners assumed the best about each other and tackled challenges in a respectful, solution-orientated way.

FIGURE 5:
Collaboration
roles



Sustaining the collaboration with a learning mindset

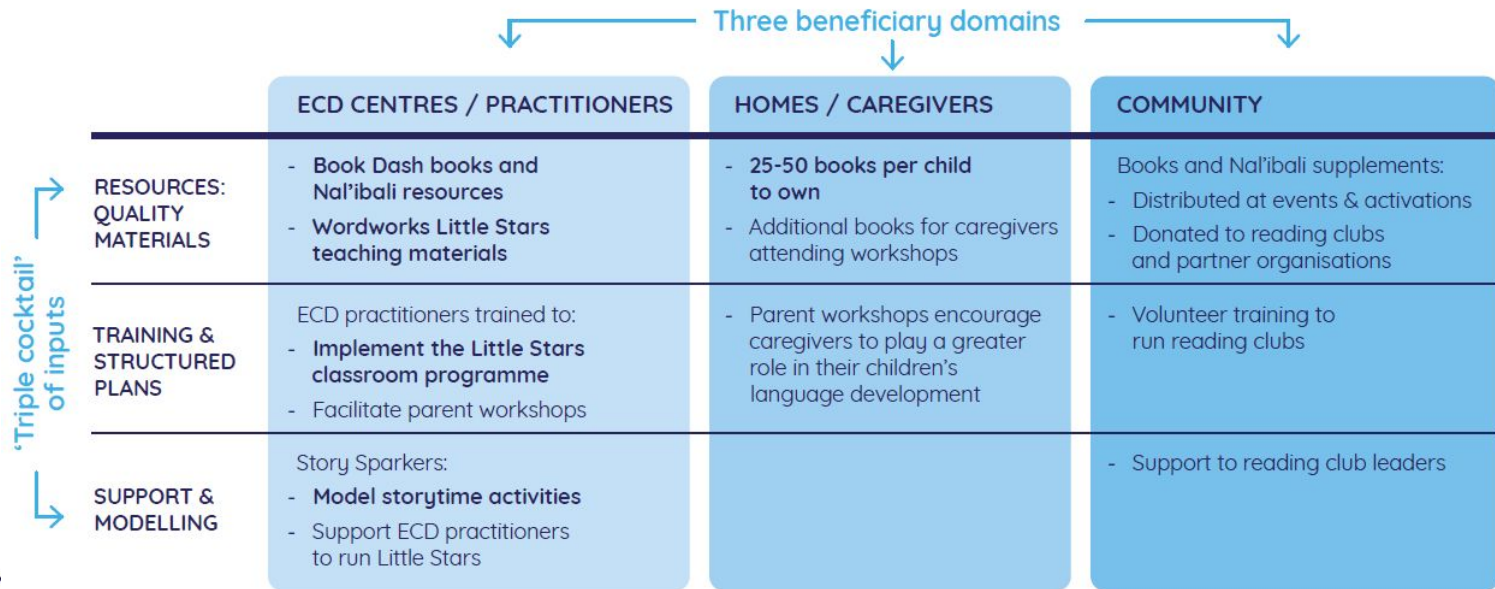
- Flexible and iterative design to manage Covid-19 disruptions: adjustments to the timeline
- Keeping the Cape Town ‘architects’ and the Eastern Cape ‘builders’ (ITEC & Khululeka, as well as the Story Sparkers and Literacy Mentors) aligned
- The joint reflection exercise at the end of the “learning year”
- Reflection as a ‘glue’ through the waves of team renewals



A brief overview of the Yizani Sifunde model

Project design

- Collaborative project designed and implemented by three literacy NGOs (Book Dash, Wordworks and Nal'ibali) to improve language and literacy of children aged 4-5.
- Implemented in three one-year cycles (2021-2023) in the Eastern Cape province
- Triple cocktail of inputs.



A brief overview of the Yizani Sifunde model

Reach & scope

Over 3 years, the project:

REACHED

1 200+

children in reading clubs

3 023

children in project classrooms

126

ECD centres around Queenstown & East London

7 600+

community members

TRAINED

126

ECD practitioners

30

youth

500+

parents and caregivers

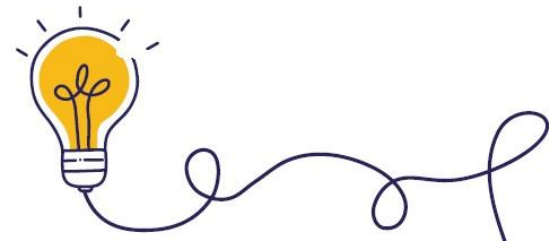
DISTRIBUTED

238 705

books

83 679

Nal'ibali reading supplements



Methodology used in the evaluation (quantitative leg)

Sampling

East London hub	19 participating ECDs in 2023	11 ECDs sampled	69 children aged 50-69 months sampled
Queenstown hub	22 participating ECDs in 2023	11 ECDs sampled	73 children aged 50-69 months sampled

Sampling criteria for ECDs:

Seek as much diversity as possible in terms of:

- geographic spread
- enrolment numbers of 4-5 year-olds
- centre registration status (17 of 22 were registered at baseline)
- fee levels (monthly fees from R30 to R350)

Data collection

SOCIAL IMPACT
INSIGHTS AFRICA

Baseline: Feb. 2023

(before start of the project activities)

ECD Level data:

- Survey of centre managers and practitioners
- Observation of infrastructure
- Basic learner statistics

Child early learning assessments: 142 children aged 50-69 months

ELOM 4 & 5

- Fine Motor Coordination & Visual Integration
- Cognition and Executive Functioning
- Emergent Literacy and Language

ELOM R (prev. 6 & 7) - Literacy

- Item 2: Productive vocabulary
- Item 10: Book orientation and word concept

Physical assessment of child growth:
height-for-age (same 142 children)

Endline: Oct. 2023

(close to the end of programme activities)

ECD Level data:

- Survey of centre managers and practitioners
- Observation of infrastructure
- Basic learner statistics

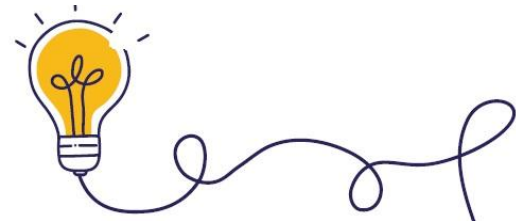
Child early learning assessments:
114 children aged 50-69 months, 99 of whom are matched from the baseline

ELOM 4 & 5

- Fine Motor Coordination & Visual Integration
- Emergent Numeracy and Mathematics
- Cognition and Executive Functioning
- Emergent Literacy and Language

ELOM R (prev. 6 & 7) - Literacy

- Item 2: Productive vocabulary
- Item 10: Book orientation and word concept



What was the impact on the children?



INSIGHT

Yizani Sifunde was effective and holistic:

Children's literacy and other skills improved significantly.

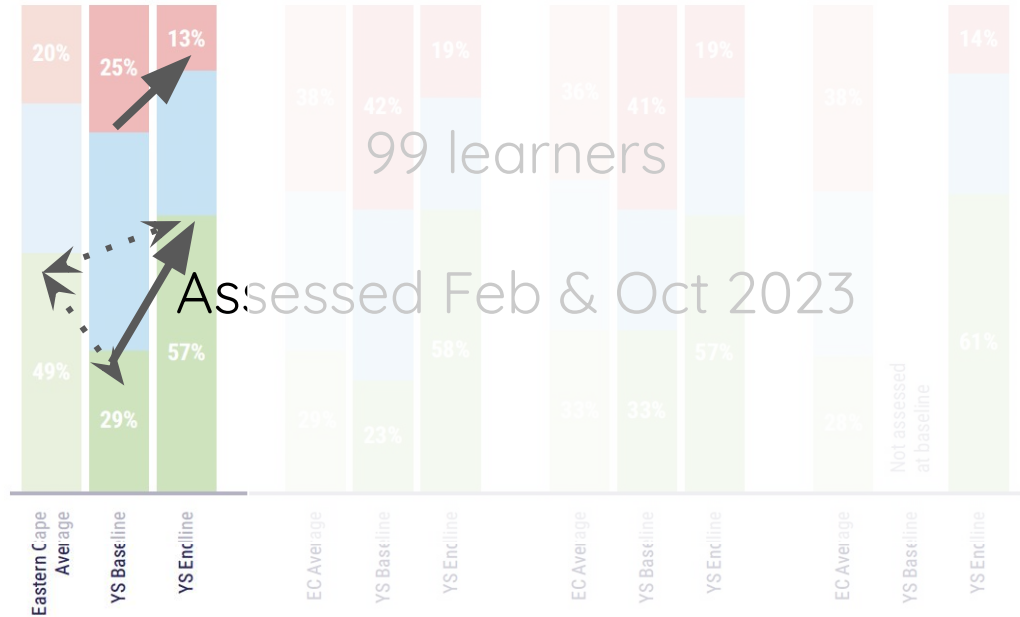
↕ Performance started below provincial averages, and ended above them

↗ The % of children on track ~doubled

↘ The % of children falling far behind ~halved

↗ Endline numeracy was well above the average (although not assessed at baseline)

FIGURE 2: ELOM 4&5 performance at baseline and endline, and vs. provincial averages



Literacy & language



Fine motor skills



Executive functioning

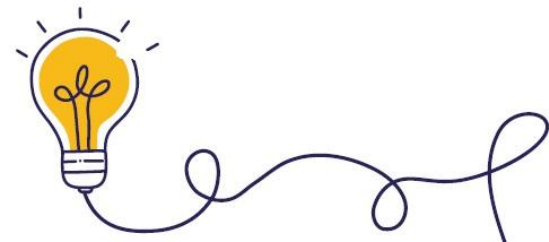


Numeracy & maths

■ On track

■ Falling behind

■ Falling far behind



What was the impact on the children?



INSIGHT

**Yizani Sifunde
was progressive:**

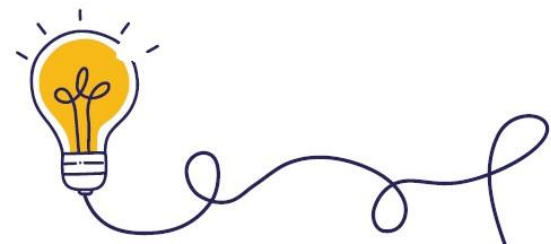
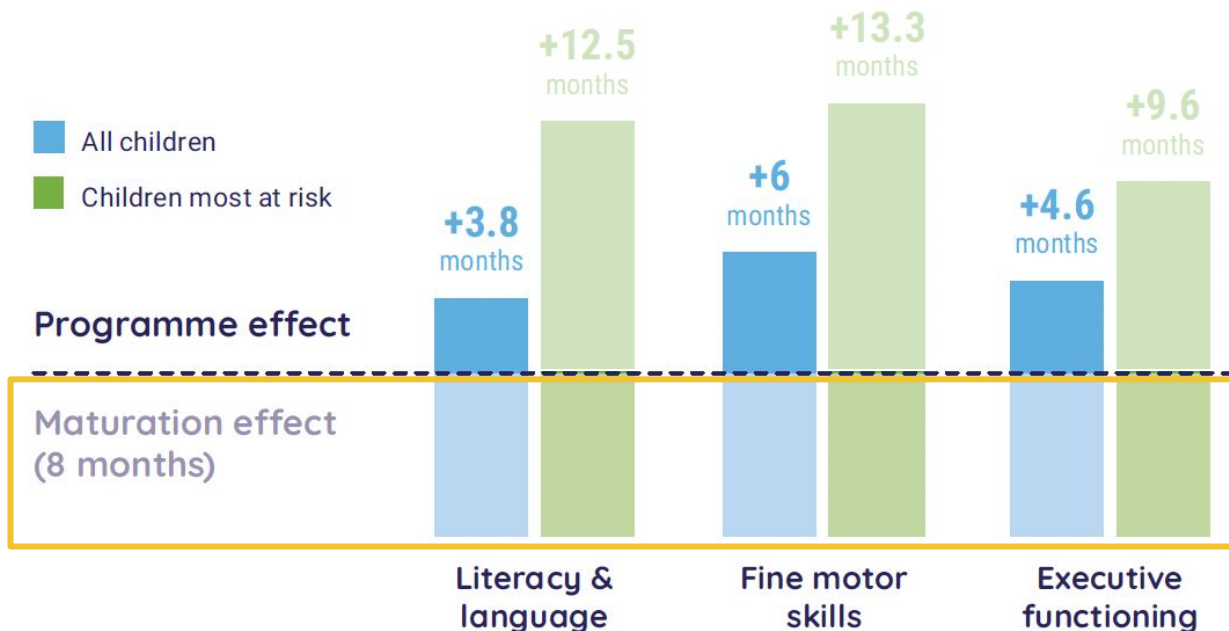
Struggling children improved the most.

In 8 months, the project delivered an average of:

 **Up to 6 months**
of additional learning for all children (above expected age-related gains)

 **Up to 13 months**
of additional learning for children who were 'falling far behind' at baseline

FIGURE 3: Average learning gains in months, above expected age-related gains



What has shifted in the ECD centres?



INSIGHT

The project sustainably improved teaching practices and learning environments.

Sustainable change

A year after participation ended:

- ★ Most practitioners sustained or increased all Little Stars activities.
- ★ Storybook reading increased the most.
- ★ Most resources remained at centres.

FIGURE 4: Teaching practice scores at case study centres vs. typical scores, using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)



Across all centres, by year-end:



ECD practitioners



were more confident with all practices, especially storytelling, book reading and listening



needed more support with emergent writing



Children



were significantly more engaged



needed more support to use books independently at school



Classrooms



were print-rich, relaxed and calm, with abundant, visible storybooks and enough of most materials



needed more diverse book genres, and help making book corners accessible and inviting



Caregivers



asked more questions about how to help children learn, and complained less



remained challenging to engage with

What has shifted in the homes (and beyond)



INSIGHT

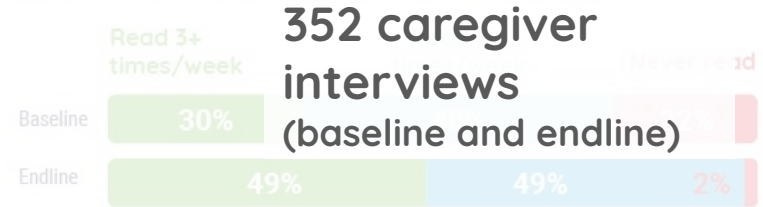
Abundant books increased reading at home, and workshops increased other positive parenting practices.



The project radically increased book ownership.



Caregivers read with children more often, whether or not they attended workshops.



Caregivers who attended workshops told stories and drew more often with children.



78% of children shared books with siblings or neighbours.

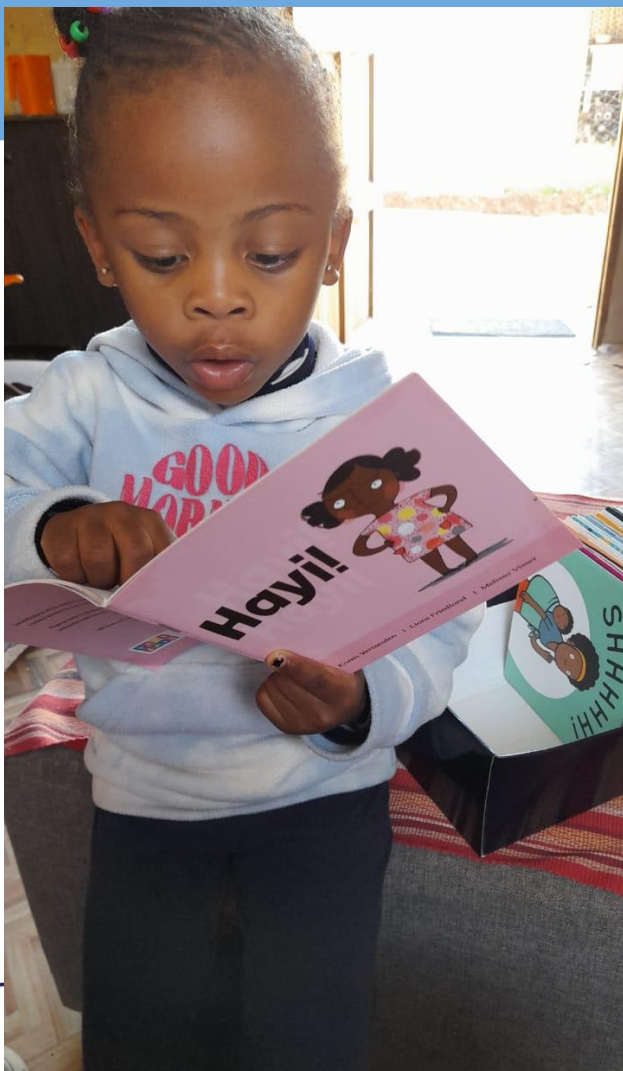


Reading clubs were well-run, and extended reach to children who did not attend ECD centres.





78% of children shared their books with siblings or neighbours. This is Apendule (5 years old) in Ncera, sharing his Book Dash books with his older siblings



☆☆ The role of books ☆☆

Children with more books at home had better: ☆



overall ELOM
performance



executive
functioning



early
numeracy

even after controlling for other factors.*

*The evaluation used regression analysis to examine how owning more books contributed to learning gains.

This finding does not indicate that book ownership was more effective than other parts of the model, as it was not possible to run regression analysis for all components of the model.



How the caregivers' behaviour shifts happened

How did owning books lead to more reading?



THE "NUDGE EFFECT"



STORY SPARKERS &
ECD PRACTITIONERS

regularly asked children if
they were reading at home



CHILDREN

enthusiastically pressured
caregivers to read with them

THE "JOY & PRIDE" EFFECT

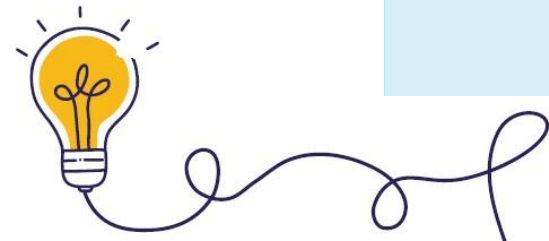
felt excited, happy and proud to see
their child's skills and intelligence



CAREGIVERS



Caregivers and children read
together more regularly



Wrap-up and next steps: our learning briefs

Yizani Sifunde: Exploring the impact of a collaborative, multi-pronged early literacy intervention on 4- and 5-year olds

Learning Brief 1 - Yizani Sifunde: the design of a multi-pronged intervention for early literacy

Project design and how it improved over time.

Learning Brief 2 - Yizani Sifunde: lessons from a successful multi-NGO collaboration

What made the collaboration work

Learning Brief 3 - Yizani Sifunde, an effective programme to close the early literacy gap

Lessons learnt from the quantitative child impact data

Learning Brief 4 - How Yizani Sifunde strengthened teaching and learning in ECD centres

Shifts observed in the ECD centres, and how sustainable they have been.

Learning Brief 5 - Impact beyond the classroom: shifts in homes and communities

What shifted for parents and caregivers; and lessons learnt from the reading clubs



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Thank you!

