



EDUCATION COMMON APPROACH: LITERACY BOOST

Global Learning Crisis

An estimated **250 million** children worldwide are **unable to read** - 130 million of whom have completed four years of primary education.



2016 – 2018 Basic Education Strategic Focus

Within the first three years of primary education, children are able to read and write, and schools are places where children are safe and happy.



LEARN: CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO READ & WRITE

Literacy Boost is Save the Children's innovative, evidence-based response to the **global learning crisis**. Literacy Boost helps teachers, students, parents and communities to build children's reading and writing skills in and outside of schools.

As a result, Literacy boost supports the realisation of Save the Children's **LEARN** breakthrough (i.e., By 2030, deprived children attend good quality inclusive basic education and demonstrate relevant learning outcomes).

The **four key elements** of the approach are: assessments of students, teacher training, mobilising communities to support children's reading, and enhancing the literacy environment. Literacy Boost has a proven record of improving children's reading skills across the world. Since 2009, Literacy Boost has completed a rigorous testing and development process and produced a body of evidence showing that it is effective, replicable and scalable in a range of contexts.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Literacy Boost provides a platform for Save the Children to represent the voice of children and advocate for pro-equity literacy policies and practices. The approach is an **innovative**, evidence-based, replicable breakthrough solution, which continues to adapt and improve.

It achieves **scale** through fostering a culture of reading among children, families, schools and communities, and by influencing Ministries of Education in numerous countries. **Partnerships** with civil society, communities, schools and Governments are created to ensure the sustainability of the approach.

FOCUS ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Literacy Boost focuses on **five core reading skills** that have been proven central to literacy education – *letter knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, reading fluency and comprehension* – as well as writing skills.

Literacy Boost differs from other literacy programmes implemented in low-income countries in two main ways. Firstly, it places equal emphasis on literacy acquisition in formal schooling and in communities (e.g., Reading Clubs and Parent Awareness Trainings). Secondly, Literacy Boost is intended for adaptation to the national and local curricular context, and does not require a change to the national curriculum. Teachers gain a better understanding of how children learn to read and write, and the importance of mother tongue instruction. This improved understanding, along with the opportunity to strengthen their pedagogical approaches, allows teachers to teach their existing curriculum more effectively.



*Figure 1. Map of Implementation - Literacy Boost has been implemented by Save the Children since 2009, in 34 Countries and with the support of 10 Members globally, and partners.

More children will learn to read with comprehension if they are supported both inside and outside of the classroom. By focusing on core skills, Literacy Boost helps children learn to read independently, using activities that promote reading motivation and enjoyment. The four elements of Literacy Boost are:

1. **assessments** to identify gaps and measure improvements in the five core reading skills and writing;
2. **training teachers** to teach national curriculum with an emphasis on core reading skills and writing;
3. **mobilising communities** to support children's reading;
4. **enhancing the literacy environment** to ensure the availability of appropriate reading material.

IMPACT ON LEARNING

Each Literacy Boost project includes a robust assessment design, and so since 2009 a large body of evidence has been collected about the approaches' effectiveness. For example, a 2014 evaluation of Literacy Boost and control schools, across seven countries in Asia and Africa, found that a greater percentage of students became readers with comprehension in Literacy Boost schools. Results have also proven that Literacy Boost has an important impact for the poorest children. In Malawi, the poorest 20% of students experienced a 27% gain in single word reading; this was a 13% greater gain than that of comparison group students.

REACHING THE MOST DEPRIVED

A recent adaptation of Literacy Boost (**Learning and Wellbeing in Emergencies**) addresses the specific learning challenges in humanitarian situations. The adaptation draws on the structure and content of Literacy Boost, integrates a focus on social emotional learning and child resilience, as well as offers simplified and alternative strategies for the roll-out of activities. It was recently piloted in Thailand, and is being implemented in Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, and South Sudan. Additionally, after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, Literacy Boost is being implemented jointly with the Government. Evidence and learning from the post-earthquake response aims to contribute to the national implementation guidelines for early grades reading. Literacy Boost has also been adapted to address the learning needs of students with disabilities through the **Special Needs Action Pack (SNAP)** tools.

SUPPORTING POLICY CHANGE

Literacy Boost enables a Culture of Reading and policy influence with Ministries of Education. Of the various ripple effects identified in [2015 research](#), 20 countries documented **government-level uptake** of core concepts and strategies of Save the Children's Literacy Boost programming. This will result in longer-term systemic change that can improve early grade reading outcomes for tens of millions of children. Specific systems changes included: improved teacher training methods, the introduction of supplementary reading materials into the government curriculum, greater interest in community action and engagement around literacy, and adoption of mother tongue instruction and materials.

Positive Results for Girls

Literacy Boost projects have been proven to increase equity of learning for many groups, including girls. From Malawi, Pakistan and Zimbabwe comes evidence that girls in Literacy Boost schools significantly improved their reading skills as a result of the approach (e.g., Urdu speaking girls in Literacy Boost schools in Pakistan, improved their reading accuracy by 24% more than girls in non-Literacy Boost schools).

