



Tuesdays in the Trenches

The Yizani Sifunde Project

A NASCEE Literacy Presentation Series

18 June 2024

Yizani Sifunde

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



NASCEE

National Association of
Social Change Entities in Education

Intellectual property



This presentation contains the results of an evaluation of the Yizani Sifunde project, as implemented by Wordworks, Book Dash and Nal'ibali and funded by the Liberty Community Trust (LCT). The research and evaluation was conducted by Social Impact Insights Africa as commissioned by LCT. It is shared here with express permission from LCT. Please do not re-share without permission from one of the partners, or LCT.

Describe your project



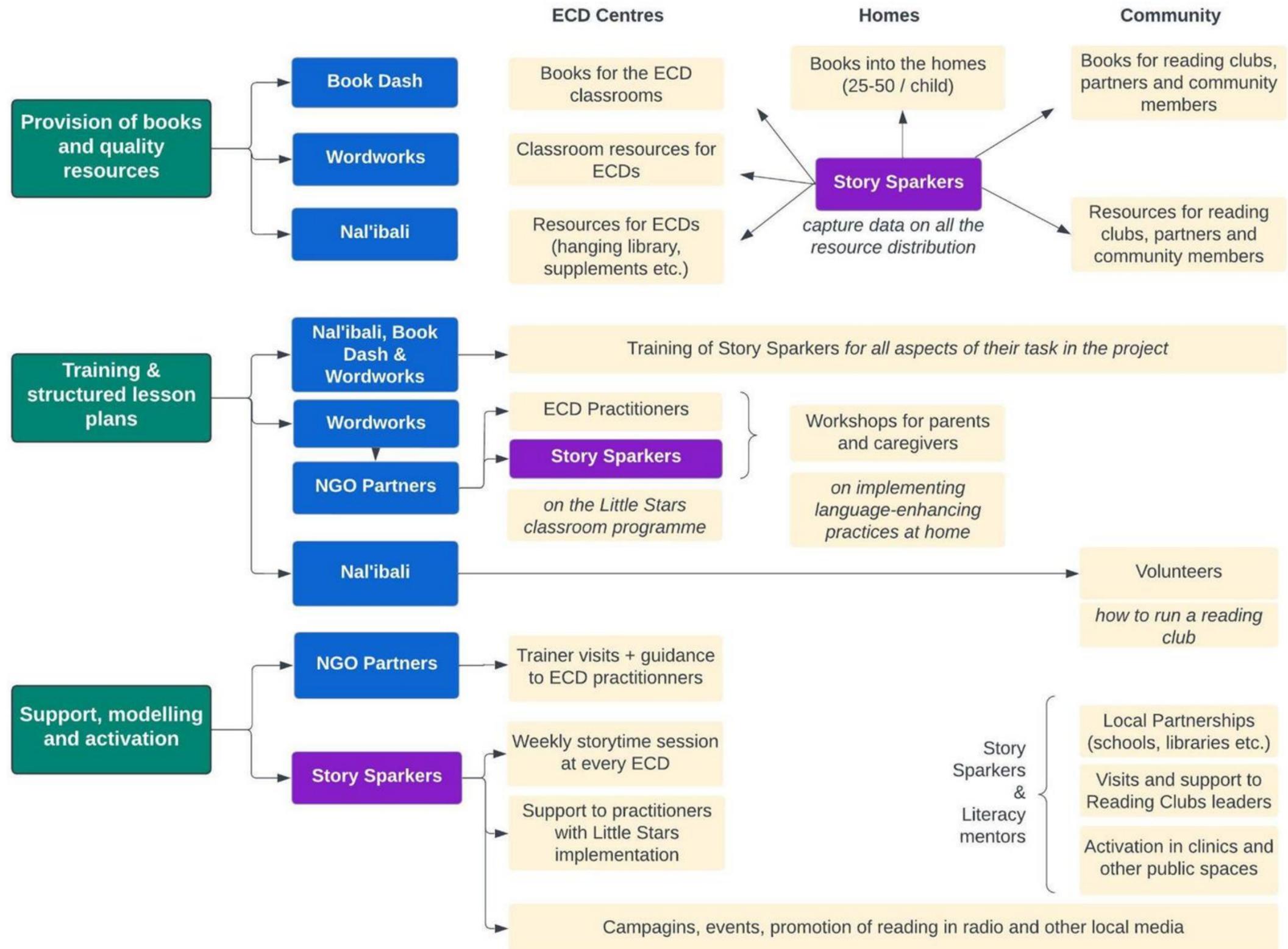
	Description	Detail
1.	Process overview:	<p>In 2019 Liberty Community Trust (LCT) approached Book Dash, Na'ibali and Wordworks, and challenged them to design a comprehensive response to the early literacy crisis in the Eastern Cape. After receiving the initial individual submissions, LCT requested a jointly-designed, holistic proposal drawing on the the strengths and expertise of each of the three organisations.</p> <p>The result was Yizani Sifunde, a collaborative value chain intervention, which was funded by LCT for 5 years.</p>
2.	Aim / Objectives / Goals:	<p>It is a multi-pronged project that aims to improve early literacy outcomes through infusing underserved communities with a 'triple cocktail' of high-quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) training, an abundance of home language storybooks for pre-school children to own, and sustained support for early literacy practices in the home and wider community.</p>
3.	Target audience / Beneficiaries: (Learners / teachers / school managers / district and provincial officials)	<p>Children aged 4-5 in ECDs, their teachers (ECD practitioners), their parents/caregivers, and the community surrounding the ECDs.</p>
4.	Dosage:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ECD practitioner training on Wordworks' Little Stars programme: 6-week cycles ● Story-time reading sessions at ECDs by Story Sparkers: weekly ● Reading clubs in the community: variable, but mostly weekly ● Book Dash home language storybooks: 25-50 per child, per year

* Please include a slide on your Theory of Change if you have

one



The Yizani Sifunde Design (2022-2023)

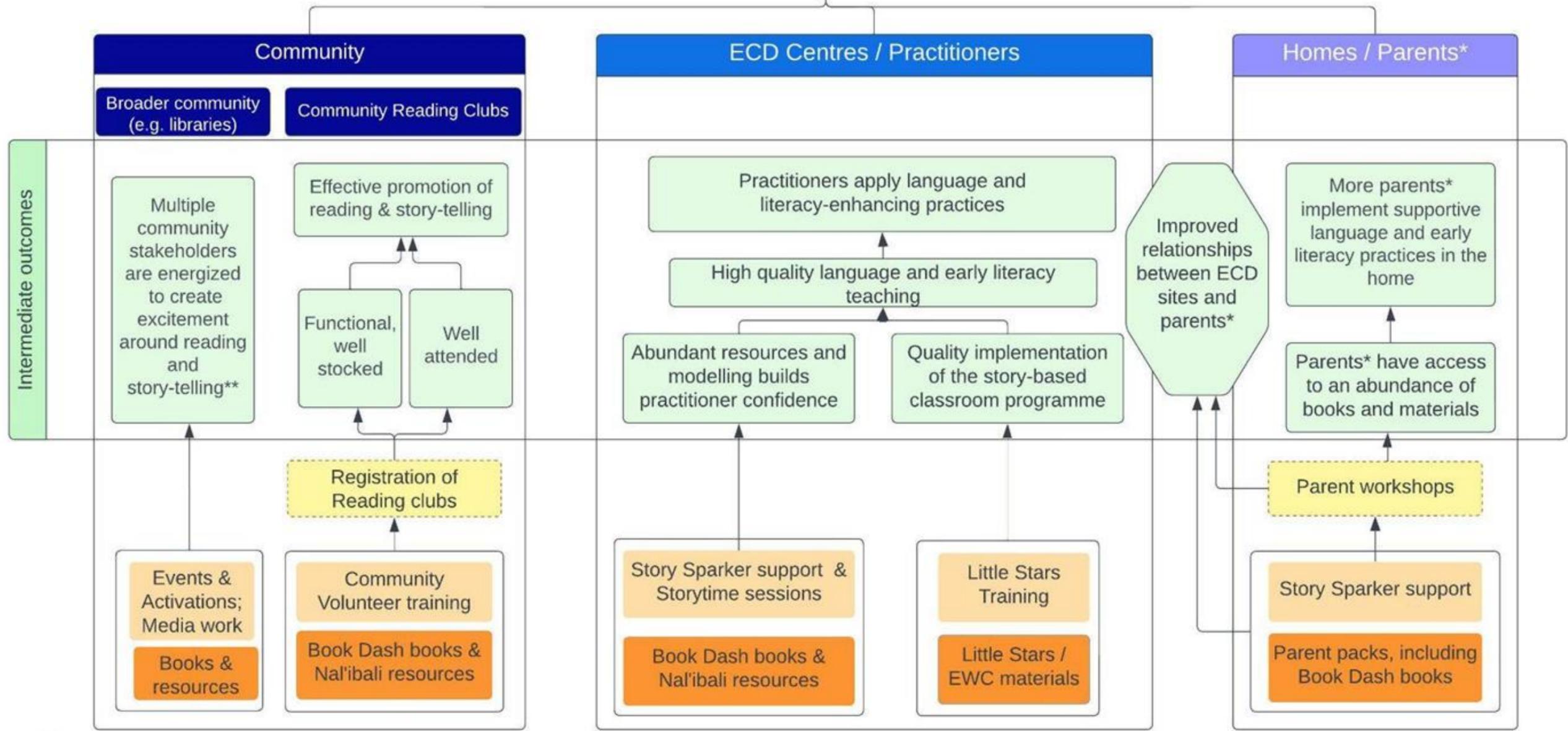




Expected results chain

Children are **confident** in their oral language
 + **excited** about stories & reading

Children enjoy multiple opportunities to read / hear stories outside of the home
 Children experience reading & storytelling** as a positive, nurturing, exciting activity
 Children develop age-appropriate confidence in interacting with books
 Children develop age-appropriate oral language, vocabulary and narrative skills
 Children have access to relevant, attractive books at home



Notes:

* The word "parent" is used to refer to the child's main caregiver and may include grandparents, siblings or other caregivers.

Partnerships

Who are the project donors? Are you working with other NGOs?
What level of government (if any) are you partnering with?



Organisation (& footprint)	Role	Level of involvement
Consortium between Nal'ibali , Wordworks and Book Dash	<p>Nal'ibali appointed 30 Story Sparkers who were trained and assigned to conduct story sessions in specific ECDs once a week, using the Nal'ibali techniques for reading and storytelling. The team of Story Sparkers was supported by two Literacy Mentors, one in each hub. Nal'ibali also distributed 83,678 newspaper supplements and trained 892 community adults on how to establish or support reading clubs.</p> <p>Wordworks was responsible for training the trainers at two ECD NGO partners: ITEC (East London) and Khululeka (Queenstown). ITEC & Khululeka in turn, trained ECD practitioners on the Little Stars early literacy programme.</p> <p>Book Dash printed 55 different titles for the project (90% in isiXhosa), and sent them to the implementing partners in the field. 50 titles were for the children - each child received 25 books at their ECD and 25 books from the Story Sparker to take home and own. This helped children create their own home libraries and supported family literacy practices. The other 5 titles were for parent workshops, targeting parents in the ECD community.</p>	Implementing
ITEC - East London hub	Trained and supported ECD Practitioners who implemented the Little Stars programme in 65 ECDs. 65 ECDs in total - around East London up to Berlin.	Subcontracted by Wordworks
Khululeka - Queenstown hub	Trained and supported ECD Practitioners who implemented the Little Stars programme in 61 ECDs. 61 ECDs in total around Queenstown from Whittlesea in the South to Burgersdorp in the North.	Subcontracted by Wordworks
Liberty Community Trust	LCT provided funding and oversight support throughout the various stages of implementation.	Participated in Project Meetings; received reports (etc)
Eastern Cape Department of Education	Approved for the programme to be implemented and was kept informed.	Informed

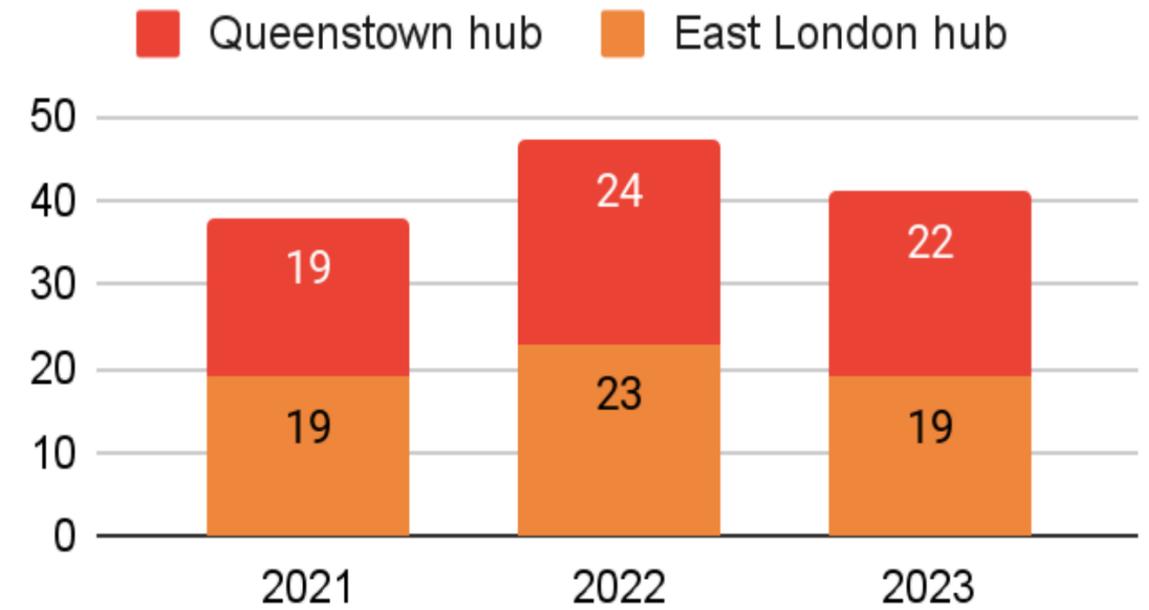




More on the Footprint



Number of ECD sites included



Indicators that you monitor

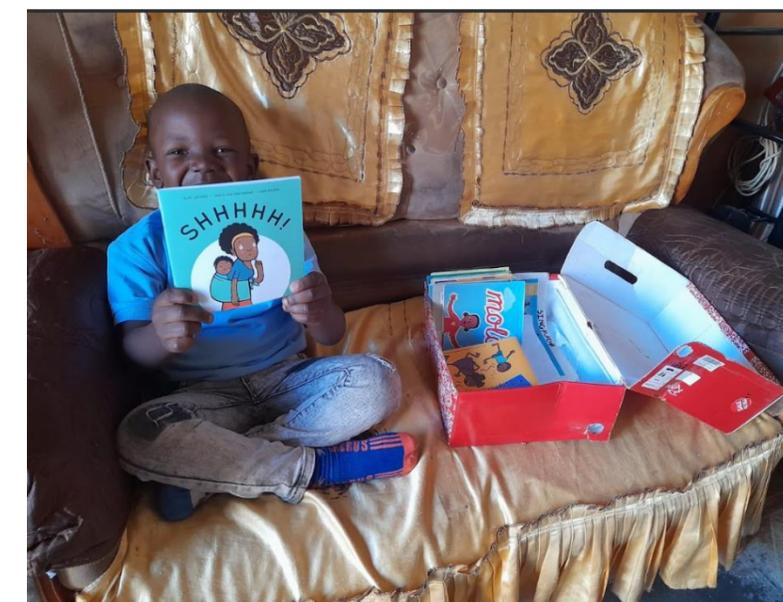
What indicators are you using to measure your outcomes or impacts?
What else are you measuring?



Programme aspect	Data collected and Monitoring indicators
Distribution of books and materials	Comprehensive database of books distributed to each ECD child and reading club participant + resources distributed to various organisations (ECDs, schools, libraries etc.)
Practitioner training and implementation	Training attendance and feedback Practitioners' self-reports on implementation Feedback from trainers after site visits Pre- and Post-classroom observations by story sparkers with photos and video footage Post-exit visits, classroom observations and interviews
Story Sparker activity	Logbooks of all activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ECD storytime sessions ● Events and activations ● Stakeholder engagement etc.
Reading club activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Registration of reading clubs ● Record of reading club sessions with child attendance
Homes / EWC Parent workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre- and Post-visits to homes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Caregiver interviews ○ DataDrive HLE Questionnaire (Home Learning Environment) ○ Photos ● Parent workshop attendance (not very robust data)



Above: Little Stars resources observed in 2024 at Nkqubela Educare in Burgersdorp (2022 cohort)



Above: A boy showing his home shoebox with books (2023 cohort)

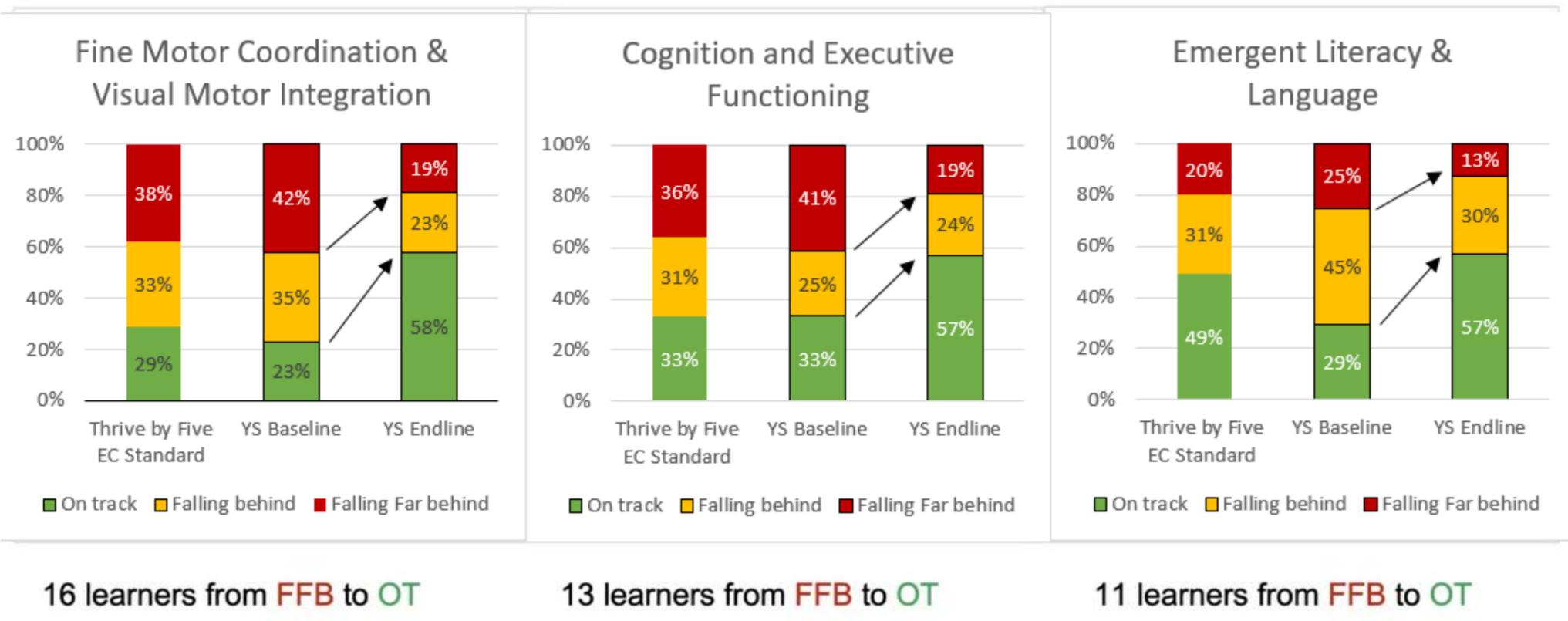
Evidence of Impact: child-level

What impacts are you seeing?
How do you measure them?



In 2022, Liberty Community Trust contracted **Social Impact Insights Africa** to run an external evaluation of the project. In addition to qualitative case studies, they sampled 22 participating ECD centres and collected data at baseline (February 2023) and endline (October 2023) - including ELOM* assessments for 3 domains. 99 learners were matched between baseline and endline.

ELOM achievement of children: Thrive by Five, YS Baseline, YS Endline



The chart shows how the 99 matched learners performed against the ELOM 4&5 benchmarks in all 3 domains, compared to the Thrive by Five results for the Eastern Cape (left bar).

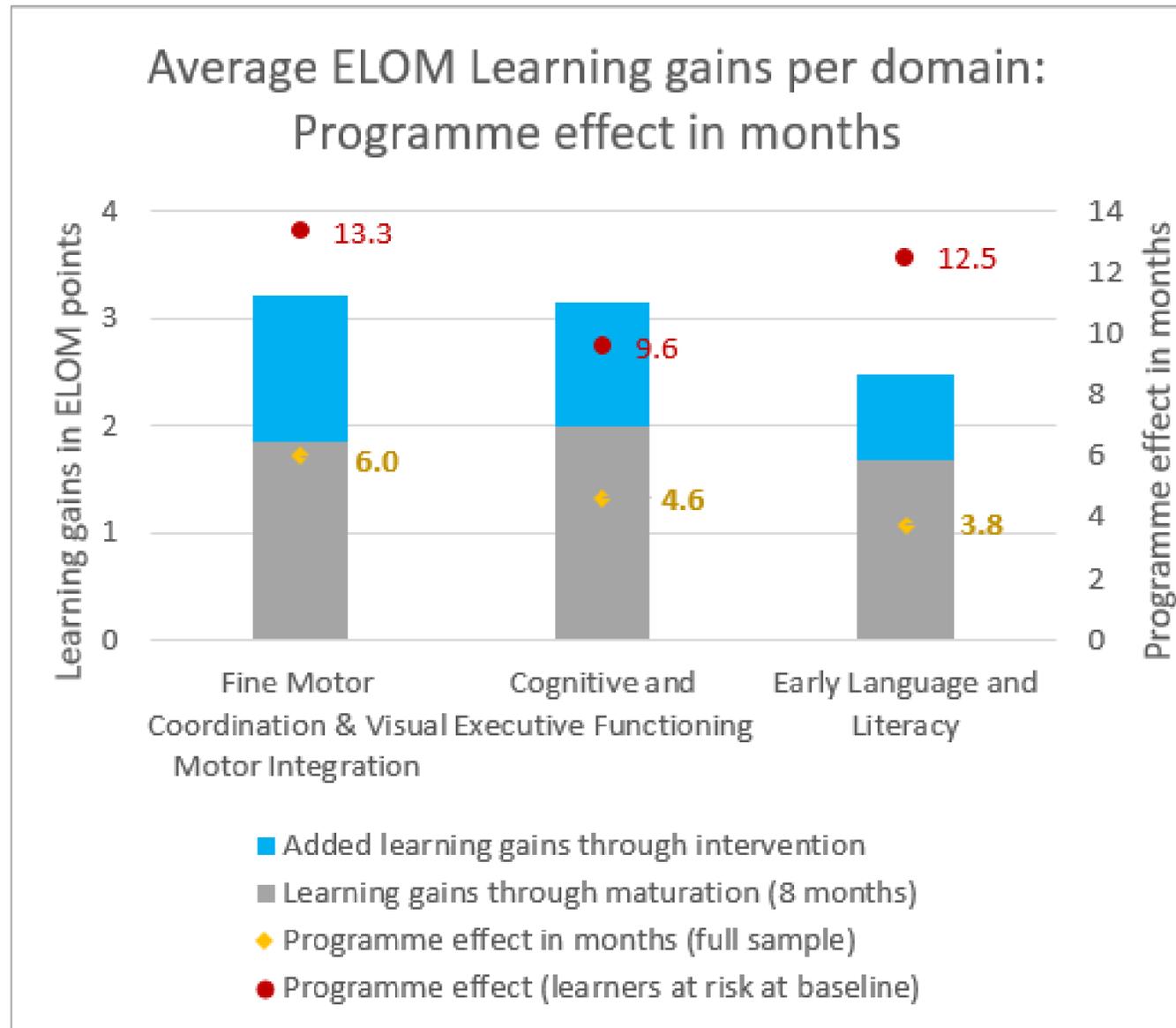
- **At baseline** the sample children performed slightly poorer than the comparison group in all 3 domains. (lower socio-economic status)
- **At endline**
 - the number of children ‘on track’ has doubled;
 - the number of children ‘falling far behind’ is more than halved.

The children with the lowest baseline scores improved most. Approximately a third of the learners who were “falling far behind” at baseline had progressed enough to reach the “on track” benchmark at endline.

*ELOM=Early Learning Outcomes Measure.
See <https://datadrive2030.co.za> for details.



Evidence of Impact: child-level (continued)



Some improvement in the ELOM scores was expected as the children have matured over the 8 months between baseline and endline. Based on statistical analysis across very large datasets, DataDrive has derived a formula to isolate a programme's effect from the maturation effect.

In this chart:

- The vertical bars represent the YS children's average learning gains between baseline and endline in each of the 3 domains assessed.
- Of these, the grey part is the expected maturation effect over 8 months, while the blue part is the additional learning plausibly caused by Yizani Sifunde ("programme effect").
- The yellow diamonds show the programme effect converted into months of learning - and the red dots show the same for the children who were classified as 'falling far behind' at baseline.

8 months of Yizani Sifunde input has translated into between **3.8 and 6 months of additional learning** for the children, on average - and as much as a year of additional learning for the most vulnerable learners.



Evidence of Impact: intermediate level

ECD Centres:

- ECERS* Scores – Classroom practices better than usually observed in similar contexts
- ELOM LPQA* – Good scores on curriculum (the other subscales were not good)
- Improved practitioner confidence => improved classroom practice quality
- Increased availability of learning resources
- These changes were largely sustained in the year after exit

Broader ecosystem:

- Participation in ECD communities of practice
- Reading club practices in partner schools
- Some shifts in the ECDs' relationship with parents / caregivers; higher level of parental involvement (this is a big challenge)

Homes:

- The ELRS* improved from 3 to 6/10;
- The HLE* data shows increased frequency of caregivers reading, telling stories, singing, drawing with their children
- 78% of children share their books with others
- Evidence of stronger bonding between caregivers and their children.

Standardised tools used:

- ECERS: Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale
- ELRS: Early Learning Resources Scale
- HLE: Home Learning Environment
- LPQA: Learning Programme Quality Assessment

To wrap up



Key takeaways

1. Yizani Sifunde is a multi-pronged literacy intervention in the ECD context, covering
 - a. Training, resources and support to ECD centres
 - b. Books for the homes and support to parents
 - c. Community embedding through events, partnerships and activations
2. Yizani Sifunde is a successful example of a multi-NGO collaboration. Making this collaboration work took commitment, time and support from each of the project partners, as well as our funder, the Liberty Community Trust.
3. Within 8 months, the shifts enabled by the project in ECDs, homes and communities. These resulted in doubling the proportion of pre-school children who were 'on-track' with their developmental milestones (from 25-30% to 55-60%).

Thank you!

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