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A THEORY, IMPLEMENTATION AND SHORT-TERM OUTCOME EVALUATION OF  
LIFEMATTERS FOUNDATION'S LITERACY INTERVENTION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the  
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COMPULSORY DECLARATION:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

Signature: .....

Date: 09/05/13

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation is a theory-driven implementation and short-term outcome evaluation of LifeMatters Foundation's (LMF's) literacy intervention. LMF implements a primary school programme in the Constantiaberg and Retreat areas of the Western Cape. Its programme is aimed at helping learners improve their literacy, numeracy and life skills and overcome challenges of trauma and inadequate nutrition.

LMF's programme theory was confirmed as plausible after a literature review was conducted using evidence-based sources. LMF's theory can be summarised as follows: foundation phase learners will substantially increase their ability to succeed in school if they receive adequate nutrition at school, overcome traumatic experiences and improve their literacy, numeracy and life skills to grade appropriate levels by the end of grade three.

Utilising this programme theory, an implementation and short-term outcome evaluation was conducted of the literacy intervention. An interview with the literacy coordinator and a survey of the literacy volunteers was administered to determine whether the literacy intervention was implemented as intended. To determine if the short-term outcome was achieved and the learners had improved to grade appropriate levels at the end of the intervention, descriptive statistics were used to analyse the diagnostic one and two test scores of the participating learners.

The evaluation determined that the literacy intervention was implemented as intended in the areas of organisational support, preparation and volunteer discipline. In most instances the intervention was implemented as intended in the areas of learner discipline and fidelity of implementation of literacy hour. Areas for programme improvement were highlighted in these areas.

The evaluation found that learners participating in the literacy intervention did show statistical significant improvement in the scores on the diagnostic two tests administered to them at the end of grade two. The learners' scores on average were not sufficient to indicate that they had achieved a grade appropriate literacy score at the end of grade two. This signified that the

literacy intervention did not achieve its short-term outcome of grade appropriate literacy skills at the end of the literacy intervention in 2012 for grade two learners. It was recommended that LMF do a further analysis of the literacy intervention's results from the last three years to determine if this result was an anomaly or a consistent trend.

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## INTRODUCTION

“...of the number of learners enrolled in grade 1, only half make it to grade 12.”  
(Modisaotsile, 2012)

South African foundation phase and primary school learners' literacy skills are below acceptable levels (Department of Basic Education, 2011) and poor compared to other countries (Van der Berg, 2008). The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) of 2006 indicated that out of 40 countries studied, South African grade five learners had the worst literacy skills compared to grade four learners of other countries (Kathard, H., Ramma, L., Pascoe, M., Jordaan, H., Moonsamy, S., Wium, A., du Plessis, S., Pottas, L., Khan, N., 2011; Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Foy, 2007). In the SACMEQ II study of 2005 the South African government had a larger educational budget than its neighbouring countries Botswana, Mozambique and Swaziland (Kathard, H., et al., 2011; Mullis, et al., 2007), but its grade six learners performed worse in the SACMEQ II literacy test (Barry, 2006; Kathard, H., et al. 2011; Van der Berg, 2008). Additional research corroborates these findings that amongst developing countries South African learners are amongst the worst performers at foundation and intermediate phase (Grant, 2009; Western Cape Education Department, 2006).

### **Foundation Phase Learners' Literacy Skill Levels at a National Level.**

National and provincial governments have reported that post-1994 the literacy skills of foundation phase and intermediate phase learners remained extremely poor in the 18 years since national independence (Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, 2006; Department of Basic Education, 2011; Department of Education, 2003; Grant, 2009; Kathard, et al., 2011; Mullis, et al., 2007; Pandor, 2005; Van der Berg, 2008; Western Cape Education Department, 2006). In 2003, the Department of Education conducted a national study of grade three learners, which reported that 61% of these learners did not have reading and writing skills appropriate for their age (Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, 2006; Kathard, H., et. al., 2011). Thirty-eight percent of the grade three learners achieved the expected learning outcome score of 50% or higher for reading comprehension. In the 2005 Systematic Evaluation, 40% of grade six pupils achieved the expected learning outcome score of 50% or higher for their language of learning (Van der Berg, 2008). The report on the 2011 Annual National Assessment (ANA) indicated that

grade three learners scored 35% on average in the standardised literacy assessments while grade six learners achieved 28% on average for the standardised language assessments. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) distinguishes between literacy for foundation phase learners (grade one to three) and language for intermediate phase learners (grade four to six). The ANA mirrored this distinction in the tests it administered to foundation phase and intermediate phase learners. ANA's achieved level of performance is 50%. Nationally, 53% of grade three learners obtained a 'not achieved' score for literacy, which is a score of 35% or less. Even more disconcerting is that 70% of grade six learners obtained a 'not achieved' score in their grade six language test (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

### **Foundation Phase Learners' Literacy Skill Levels in the Western Cape**

The performance of foundation and intermediate phase learners in the Western Cape has been as poor as grade three learners nationally. In 2002, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) launched the Western Cape's first study of grade three literacy skills. This study revealed that 32% of grade three learners were reading at a grade three level (Grant, 2009). In 2003, the WCED conducted a similar study of grade six learners finding that 35% of grade six learners passed the literacy test (Grant, 2009).

Utilising a different set of assessments, the 2011 ANA report highlighted a small improvement in grade three and six literacy levels in the Western Cape compared to the WCED's 2002 study (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Regardless of these improvements the educational system in the Western Cape is still producing foundation and intermediate phase learners who are not adequately equipped to succeed in school (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Despite learners' lack of literacy readiness in foundation and intermediate phase grades they are often allowed to proceed to their next grade. A large proportion of these pupils never achieve grade appropriate literacy and drop out of school in their higher grades due to their inability to cope with the requirements of high school. If they do remain in school until grade 12, they often fail to pass grade 12 (Grant, 2009).

## **The Apartheid Educational Legacy**

The legacy of apartheid, which denied the majority of South Africans equity in education, has resulted in a backlog of education needs that have remained a challenge for the post-apartheid government. Education has thus been made a constitutional and legal requirement through numerous policies to provide "...a just and equitable system that provides good-quality education to all learners" (Kathard, et. al., 2011, p. 62). Numerous education policies are in place to guide this process (Department of Basic Education, 2012; Hill, Alexander, Nomlomo & Joubert, 2009; Kathard, et al., 2011). The South African Treasury has shown this commitment through basic education consistently being a large budgetary allocation. In 2012/13 it allocated R207.3 billion towards education. This will increase by 6.7 per cent to R236.1 billion in 2014/15 (National Treasury Republic of South Africa, 2012). Even with legal and economic resources committed to basic education, the challenges for SA learners remain.

## **The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations**

The legacy of educational inequalities created by the apartheid government meant non-governmental organisations (NGO's) were actively involved in apartheid protest, provision of bursaries to students, educational delivery and reform (Mazibuko, 2000). This has continued post-1994 with NGO's fighting for educational improvement and intervening in schools with programmes to assist struggling learners (Khosa, n.d.) as well as assisting teachers and schools that lack capacity (Amandla Development, n.d.). These interventions have targeted primary school learners (<http://www.help2read.org/>; <http://www.literacyforall.co.za/>; <http://www.littlehandstrust.com/links.html>; <http://mytownshipschool.org>; <http://www.theshinecentre.org.za/>). Research in developed contexts indicates that educational interventions in the pre-school and foundation phase are essential in successfully assisting at-risk learners to succeed in school and after school (Bryant, Bryant, Roberts, Pfannenstiel, Porterfield, & Gersten, 2011; Gross, 2008; MacDonald & Figueredo, 2010; Smith, 2008).

## **Purpose of the Evaluation**

The South African context is different compared to the majority of research done in this field. The evident poor performance of South African learners, the allocation of resources by the government coupled with the lack of measurable improvement necessitates the evaluation of current interventions to establish where improvements can be achieved. This evaluation focuses on the LifeMatters Foundation's (LMF's) literacy intervention and hopes to contribute to the knowledge base required to improve basic education in South Africa.

Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman (2004) indicate that an evaluation should be conducted for either one of three purposes: 1) programme improvement, 2) accountability or 3) knowledge generation. Consultation with programme staff resulted in a decision to evaluate the literacy component of LMF's programme to assist with programme improvement.

A preliminary interview with the LMF's literacy coordinator indicated that the literacy intervention had an articulated programme theory with clear implementation procedures and an outcome-focused monitoring system. This evaluation will first determine the plausibility of LMF's programme theory and then determine the plausibility of the literacy intervention's theory. This will be done by comparing programme theory to evidence based literature on foundation phase school interventions. Once the plausibility of LMF's programme theory is confirmed the evaluation will compare the documented implementation procedures of its literacy intervention with its actual implementation procedures. Descriptive statistics will be used to give an initial indication of whether the literacy intervention is producing results that meet LMF's short-term outcomes for the literacy intervention.

## **Programme Description**

LifeMatters Foundation (LMF) is a Christian non-profit organisation (NPO) and a public benefit organisation (PBO) operating in 11 primary schools in the Constantiaberg and Retreat suburbs of Cape Town. Meadowridge Baptist Church (MBC) founded LMF in the year 2000. From experience and in consultation with the Western Cape primary schools it works in, LMF targets

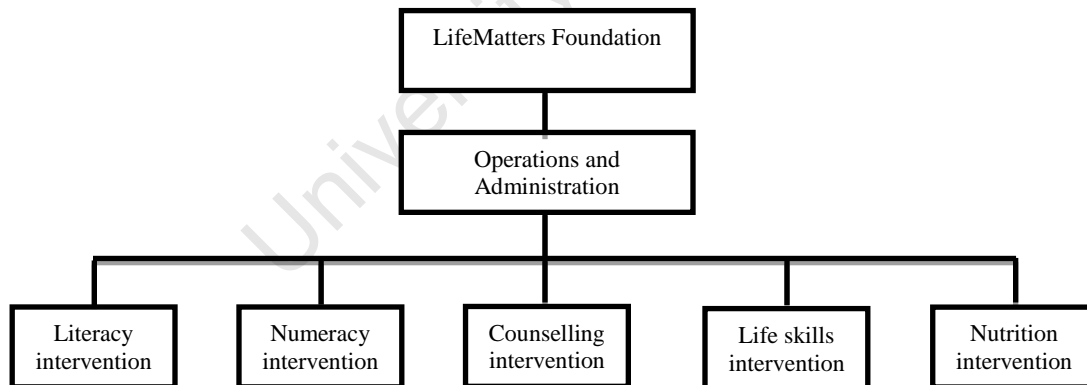
the educational, emotional, life skills and nutritional needs of grade one to seven school children. Table one depicts the problems related to each need targeted by LMF.

Table 1

*Needs and problems of primary school learners.*

Need	Specific problems
Educational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners do not have grade appropriate literacy skills</li> <li>Learners do not have grade appropriate numeracy skills</li> </ul>
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are traumatised</li> </ul>
Life skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners have poor decision making skills</li> </ul>
Nutritional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners are undernourished</li> </ul>

Considering the low socioeconomic status (SES) of the pupils (LifeMatters Foundation, n.d.), LMF identified the following focus areas to deal with the problems faced by primary school learners: literacy, numeracy, counselling, life skills and nutrition. LMF has an intervention in place for each focus area. Figure 1 illustrates the LMF organisation and its five interventions.



*Figure 1. Components of the LifeMatters Foundation interventions*

### **Programme Activities**

Rossi et. al. (2004) indicate that a programme involves service delivery, service utilisation and organisational support. Each of these components is necessary for the literacy intervention to

deliver its planned intervention activities to its intended beneficiaries. To formulate a detailed model of what activities and support services are needed for effective implementation each of these components are described in detail in this section.

### **Service delivery and service utilisation.**

The literacy intervention's key outcome is to ensure learners with inadequate literacy skills at the end of grade one are equipped with grade appropriate literacy skills by the end of grade two as measured by the Shine Centre's diagnostic two test. The targets of the literacy intervention are second language grade two foundation phase learners in under resourced schools of the Western Cape.

Grade two learners are selected to the literacy intervention based on their scores on the diagnostic one literacy pre-test administered by the literacy volunteers at the end of fourth term in grade one. All grade one learners receive the diagnostic one literacy pre-test. Learners are divided into one of the following categories based on their scores: at-risk, poor, satisfactory and good. At-risk learners are selected to participate in the literacy intervention during the remainder of the school year. If the literacy intervention has a sufficient number of volunteers learners from the poor category will be selected as well.

The literacy intervention's primary activity is literacy hour and its secondary activity is parental workshops. The purpose of literacy hour is to provide a literacy support programme twice per week to grade two learners. The purpose of parental workshops is to provide parents with the skills and tools to enable their children to successfully learn. Parental workshops are not currently implemented due to the lack of interest shown by parents when these workshops have previously been offered by LMF.

Literacy hour involves a volunteer, called a learning partner, working with two learners twice a week for an hour outside of class in the school's literacy centre. Each school has a literacy centre which is a classroom designated by the school to be used for LMF's literacy intervention. A centre manager, called the Link, oversees the centre and the literacy volunteers. The centre

manager ensures that the volunteers are doing their job according to guidelines provided by the Shine Centre. Each volunteer receives a Shine Centre training manual, attends a training workshop run by the literacy coordinator and shadows an experienced volunteer in preparation for facilitating their own literacy hour.

Literacy hour consists of the following activities: word play, have a go writing, paired reading and shared reading. Each component is 15 minutes in length and needs to be done with each learner in the order stated. During word play "...learners sound out words, blend sounds to form words, read and write simple words" (Weissenberg, Torres, White, & Nadler-Nir, 2009, p. 12). Have a go writing encourages learners to write sentences using the skills they have. They are praised for the attempts that they make and as their word play improves their attempts at writing should improve. During paired reading "...books are read with a learning partner. These books are matched to the learner's own reading level" (Weissneberg, et al., 2009, p. 12). In shared reading, "The learner chooses any book of interest to him or her and the Learning Partner reads it with the learner" (Weissneberg, et al., 2009, p. 12).

At the end of the second term a diagnostic one test is administered by the literacy volunteers to monitor the progress of the learners. At the end of the fourth term a diagnostic two test is administered to all learners by the literacy volunteers to determine whether the learners have achieved a satisfactory literacy level. If they achieve this level on the fourth term diagnostic two test they exit the intervention. The literacy intervention's intended outcome is that all participants should exit the intervention at the end of grade two. Those learners who do not achieve this level remain in the intervention in grade three until they achieve a score of satisfactory. Learners who have not achieved a satisfactory diagnostic two test score by the end of grade three automatically exit the programme. Figure 2 illustrates LMF's literacy intervention's service delivery and service utilisation flowchart depicting the key programme activities of the literacy intervention and how learners enter, participate and exit the intervention.

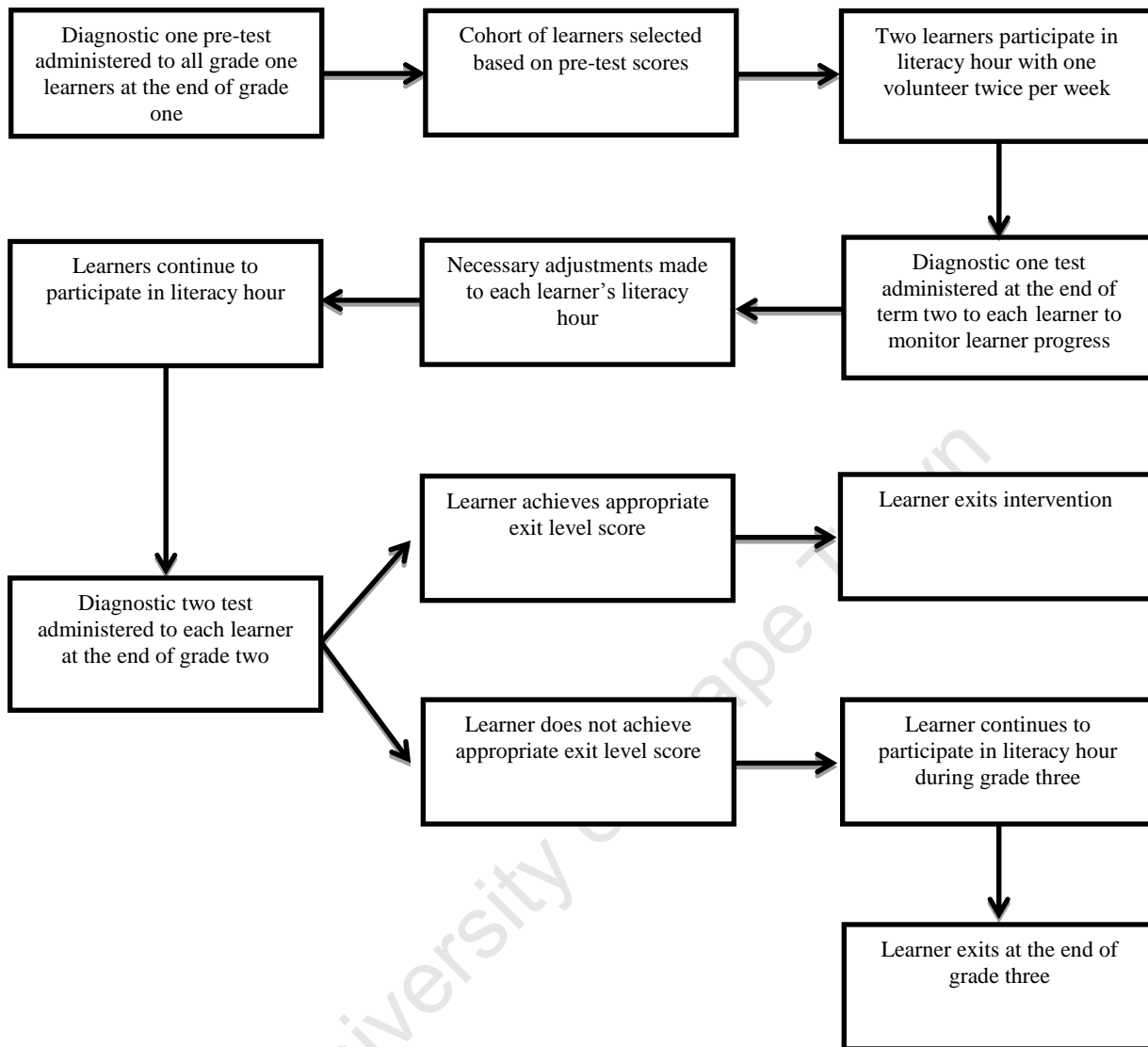


Figure 2. The literacy intervention's service delivery and service utilisation flowchart

### Organisational support.

The literacy intervention requires specific support and resources from LMF to successfully function. LMF supplies the literacy intervention with the following five areas of support: 1) a legitimate umbrella body with valid NPO and NGO certification, 2) school identification and selection, 3) funding, 4) volunteer training and recruitment, and 5) administrative support. LMF provides the literacy intervention with legitimacy by being registered as an NPO and NGO to run

its five interventions within schools of the Western Cape. It is the role of LMF's programme coordinator to select schools within which to operate, to obtain permission to work within the school and to have a signed working agreement with the school.

The organisational coordinator and operations manager are responsible for fundraising for LMF. They hold annual fundraising events and receive donations from several donors throughout the year. The funds raised are distributed to all five interventions. These funds constitute the majority of the literacy intervention's working capital. The literacy coordinator and the literacy centre manager also receive their salaries from LMF. The remainder of the staff are volunteers.

The LMF operations manager is responsible for the recruiting of volunteers for the literacy intervention. The operations manager in conjunction with the literacy coordinator is responsible for the training of the literacy volunteers. They both receive literacy training from the Shine Centre in order to be equipped to train literacy volunteers to implement literacy hour.

The LMF operations manager and administrator ensure that the literacy coordinator has sufficient administrative support. This includes access to a workstation with a computer and an internet connection. It also includes supporting each coordinator with any assistance required to ensure that the literacy and numeracy interventions remain compliant with administrative process required by the Department of Basic Education.

### **Programme Theory**

LMF's programme theory is founded on the premise that its interventions targeting foundation phase and primary school learners are able to lead to short-term change, which will result in long-term learner change (The LifeMatters Foundation, n.d.) . LMF delivers its literacy and numeracy interventions to grade two and three learners; and its counselling, life skills and nutrition interventions to grade one to seven learners. Figure 2 depicts LMF's programme theory.

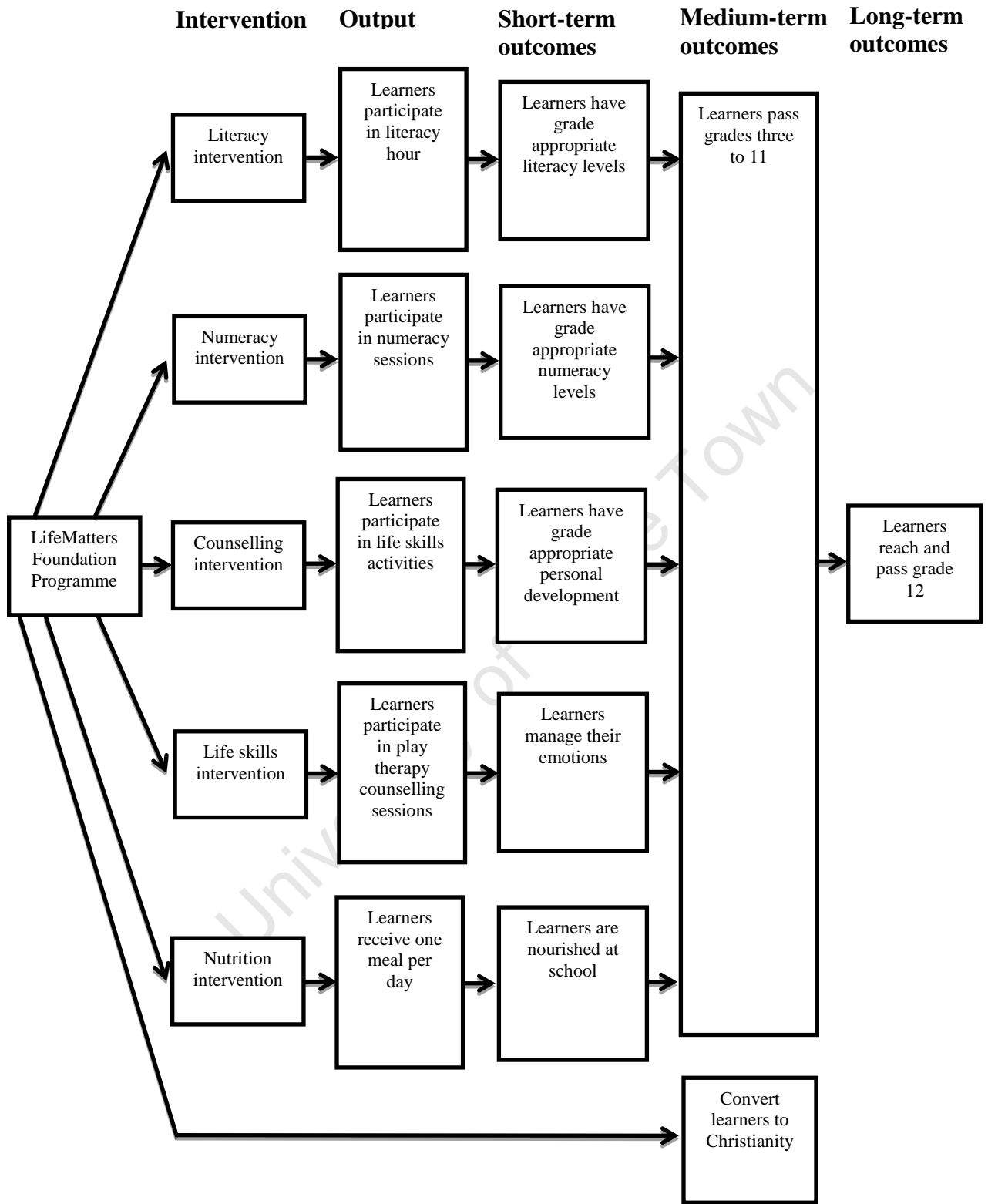


Figure 3. LifeMatters Foundation programme theory

LMF's long-term outcome is for learners to reach grade 12 and pass the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. For LMF's long-term outcome to be realised it is necessary that its short and medium-term outcomes are achieved. LMF's five short-term outcomes aim to help learners pass grades three to 11. The short-term outcomes are for learners to:

- Have grade appropriate literacy levels
- Have grade appropriate numeracy levels
- Have grade appropriate decision making skills
- Manage their emotions
- Be nourished at school

Through helping learners achieve these five outcomes LMF aims to achieve its medium-term outcome of learners passing grades three to 11 and its long-term outcome of learners reaching and passing grade 12.

### **Plausibility of Programme Theory**

To understand whether LMF's programme theory was plausible this study conducted a review of relevant literature. The literature review aimed to determine whether LMF was targeting the correct need and if its programme theory was sound.

#### **Literature review.**

A review of current literature on evidence-based practices for preschool and primary school literacy interventions was conducted. A key outcome within the foundation phase is that learners need to have grade appropriate literacy skills at the end of grade three (Bryant, Bryant, Roberts, Pfannenstiel, Porterfield, & Gersten, 2011; Muter & Snowling, 2009; Report on the Foundation Phase Conference, 2008). Research has shown that learners who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are not likely to have the literacy skills required for grade one (Locke, Ginsborg & Peers, 2002; Sherry & Draper, 2012). The consequence of not been prepared for grade one is that it is likely that these learners will not have mastered the essential literacy skills required by grade

three for success in school in grades four to twelve (Gross, 2008; MacDonald & Figueredo, 2010).

Previous studies have established that children unable to achieve age appropriate literacy skills by their second year of schooling will have poor life chances and they will likely not escape poverty and its debilitating consequences (Gross, 2008a). Children with poor literacy skills at the end of the foundation phase are at an increased risk of social exclusion, truancy, arrests, poor physical health, poor mental health, heavy smoking, heavy drinking, obesity, depression (in woman specifically) and unemployment in their adult lives (Gross, 2008a). Children from disadvantaged backgrounds who avoided poverty in their adult lives had literacy levels higher than those of their peers at the ages of five and 10 (Gross, 2008a). It is important that children, but especially those children from disadvantaged backgrounds, receive literacy interventions in either preschool or the foundation phase (Bryant et. al., 2011; Gross, 2008a; MacDonald & Figueredo, 2010; Smith, 2008)

Numerous approaches by educational organisations are used to improve literacy skills of learners in preschools and primary schools (Jagannathan, 1999). Before deciding on a specific approach such organisations should consider: a) whether to have an holistic intervention or not, b) whether to target preschool or foundation phase learners, and c) whether to use volunteers or professionals to implement the intervention. Each of these areas will be discussed further comparing what LMF does to what evidence-based research shows is the most appropriate method to implement foundation phase educational interventions.

### ***Holistic intervention approaches.***

The challenges children have in pre-school and the foundation phase - such as poor gross motor skills, low literacy and numeracy skills, emotional trauma, poor interpersonal skills and poor nutrition - are indications of a complicated set of social challenges that manifest at school (Bercow, 2008; Gardner, 2008; Gross, 2008; Sherry & Draper, 2012; Weare, 2008). Utilising interventions focused on dealing with single symptoms, such as poor literacy skills or improving school infrastructure and teaching, do not adequately assist these learners to overcome the

challenges created by a social system, which often puts them at-risk by virtue of the community and family they are born into (Smith, 2008; Springate, Atkinson, Straw, Lamont, & Grayson, 2008). At-risk learners require high quality schooling, but often are so inadequately prepared for school that they require interventions that focus on the multiple areas they lack in. Holistic interventions during the preschool and foundation phase are important to at-risk learners' success at school in the long term (Gross, 2008; Alabama Department of Education, 2009).

When helping children who live in poverty it is necessary to use a holistic approach and not a single intervention approach. It is necessary to incorporate components that deal with issues related to social disadvantage that effect children. These components need to deal with, “behavioural difficulties, poor school attendance and lack of parental support for learning” (Gross, 2008, p. 45; Gardener, 2008; McDonald, 1999; Weare, 2008) as well as insufficient nutrition (Department of Education, 2005; Springate, Atkinson, Straw, Lamont & Grayson, 2008). Figure 3 indicates the five areas a foundation phase educational intervention could focus on, namely 1) literacy, 2) numeracy training, 3) parental training, 4) emotional support and 5) nutrition. Focusing on these five areas is the most cost-effective way to efficiently enhance at-risk foundation phase learner's life chances in the short, medium and long term (Department of Education, 2005; Gross, 2008).

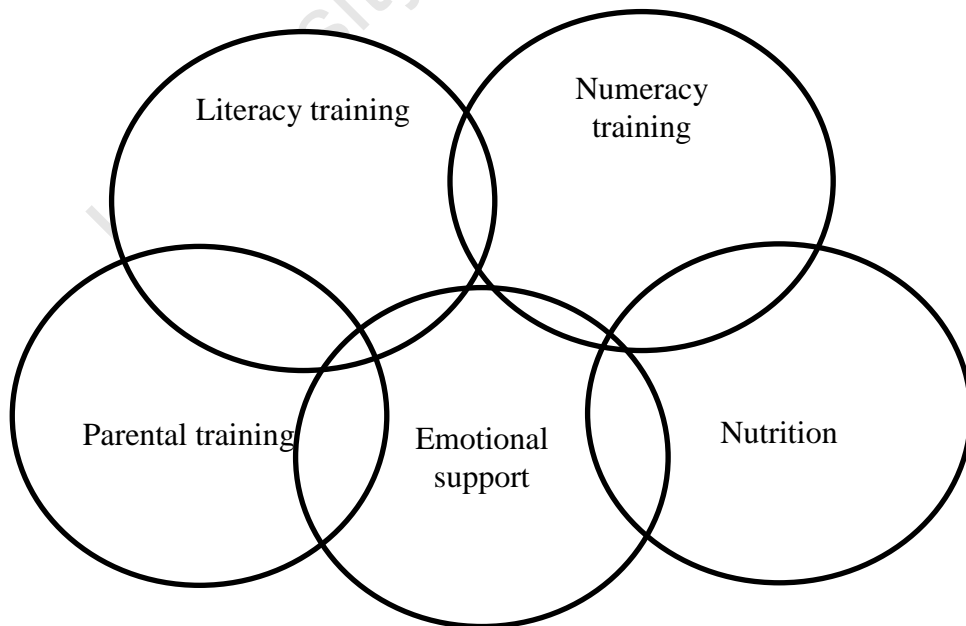


Figure 4. An effective model for foundation phase educational interventions

LMF’s programme theory is theoretically based on a very similar holistic model. Its five-pronged programme deals with the five aforementioned areas through the implementation of the following interventions:

Table 2

*Comparison of key education intervention focus areas and LMF’s programme*

<b>Key Focus Area</b>	<b>Intervention</b>
Literacy training and numeracy training	Literacy intervention Numeracy intervention
Parental training	Literacy intervention
Emotional support	Counselling and life skills intervention
Nutrition	Nutrition intervention

***Beneficiaries.***

Each educational intervention should target a specific age group of learner. LMF’s literacy intervention targets grade two and three learners within the foundation phase. Available literature indicates that literacy interventions can target preschool learners or foundation phase learners (Gross, 2008a; Reynolds, Mavrogenes, Bezruczko & Hagemann, 1996). Targeting either of these groups or both of them has been shown to increase the life chances of these learners in the medium to long term (Gross, 2008a; Reynolds, Mavrogenes, Bezruczko & Hagemann, 1996).

Early intervention in infant and preschool children’s lives is a critical period that educational interventions need to focus on (MacDonald & Figueredo, 2010; Smith, 2008; Gross, 2008a). Gross (2008) argues that there is a need for literacy interventions to focus on children up to the age of eight. It is not an adequate strategy “...to get small children ‘school-ready’ and then leave it to the normal educative process to make sure that disadvantaged children keep up with their peers” (Gross, 2008, p. 16). The foundation phase is the last period of children’s lives where effective change is possible (Gross, 2008). According to Gross (2008), intervening in children’s lives between the ages of 8 and 11 years old is ineffective.

Lessing and de Witt (2005) show that prior to grade one children need to develop early literacy skills if they are to become proficient at reading during school. In a study of 287 South African grade R second language learners, they found that 35,9% met the basic requirements for early literacy development needed when entering grade one. It is imperative to find and use strategies which have shown to impact at-risk learners between preschool and grade three (Gross, 2008a).

According to Moloi and Chetty (2011), in a 2007 study by SACMEQ utilising a sample of 9071 grade six learners, on average across all provinces 74% of South African learners attended preschool. This number increased to 82% of learners in the Western Cape. Across the country 61% of learners with low socioeconomic status attended preschools. This should be seen as significant for NGOs in South Africa, because these figures indicate preschool interventions would be a possibility with poorer learners.

The available evidence indicates that children need to have age appropriate literacy skills by the end of grade three (Gross, 2008a). Interventions targeting preschool learners or foundation phase learners both yield results that have long term impacts. An NGO deciding which group of learners to target would need to make that decision based on whether targeting preschool or foundation phase learners will ensure the learners reach grade three with age appropriate literacy skills.

### *Utilising volunteers or professionals.*

In a developed world context, researchers promote utilising professionals to intervene with learners who are struggling at school. These learners are part of families with a low SES and the parents of these children cannot afford to provide them with the help required to improve their literacy skills. Education specialists advocate that professionals and not inadequately trained volunteers implement interventions for these struggling learners. In this way a large proportion of at-risk learners are able revert to their age appropriate literacy levels in a short space of time and continue successfully with their school careers (McDonald, 1999; Laws, 2008; North, 2008; Springate et. al., 2008).

In developed countries a lower number of foundation phase learners have poor literacy skills and their governments have large educational budgets (Gross, 2008). In this context, the researchers' argument that learners who are struggling should receive appropriate interventions by professionals makes sense. This approach is not currently possible in a developing country such as South Africa, where half of all primary school learners have inadequate literacy skills that would put them at-risk of long-term educational failure (Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, 2006; Department of Basic Education, 2011; Department of Education, 2003; Grant, 2009; Kathard, et al., 2011; Mullis, et al., 2007; Pandor, 2005; Van der Berg, 2008; Western Cape Education Department, 2006). Alternative solutions are needed in this context.

LMF uses volunteers as their primary human resource for working with foundation phase learners who have poor literacy skills. It is imperative to see if utilising volunteers in this capacity is an effective means to improve foundation phase learner's literacy skills as insufficient research has been conducted in a developing world context that focuses on the effectiveness of such volunteers.

The evaluator did find one study of educational NGOs in India utilising community members as providers of supplementary educational support to marginalised preschool and primary school learners. Evidence from this study suggests that working with willing communities is possibly an effective method to combat poor literacy and numeracy skills in foundation phase learners. No statistical evidence of learner improvement was provided to corroborate this argument (Jagannathan, 1999).

#### ***Literature review conclusion.***

LMF's programme theory indicates that its multipronged approach is targeting the correct age group of learner, that is, the foundation phase learner. It is also evident that LMF does theoretically incorporate a holistic approach with its focus on literacy, numeracy, counselling, life skills and nutrition. Questions were raised around the suitability of using volunteers as implementing agents. Further research is needed in this area.

## Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions were divided into four sections to cover programme theory, service delivery, service utilisation and organisational support. For an intervention to be successfully implemented it is required that its programme theory is sound, its core activities (services) are implemented with fidelity and that the recipients of the intervention utilise these services appropriately and sufficiently to ensure the intervention's short-term outcomes are achieved (Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman, 2004). The literature review indicated that LMF had sound programme theory and that it was suitable for an implementation and short-term outcome evaluation.

Questions derived from the literature review focused on LMF's programme theory and were utilised to better understand:

1. The rationale behind why LMF's literacy intervention is only targeting foundation phase learners (LifeMatters Foundation, n.d.).
2. Why LMF selectively implements its interventions in each school (LifeMatters Foundation, 2012).

The service delivery and organisational support questions were utilised to measure the fidelity of the implementation of the literacy intervention. The short-term outcome questions were utilised to determine whether the literacy intervention successfully achieved its short-term outcome of grade appropriate literacy skills for learners upon exit of the literacy intervention. This evaluation asked the following questions:

Programme theory questions:

1. Why does the literacy intervention only target foundation phase learners?
2. Why does LMF selectively implement its interventions in each school?

Service delivery questions:

3. Was the literacy intervention implemented as intended?

Organisational support questions:

4. Did LMF offer the literacy intervention sufficient support for it to be able to successfully implement the literacy intervention?

Proximal outcome questions:

5. Was there an overall improvement in literacy skills by learners who participated in the literacy intervention?
6. Did each learner achieve grade appropriate literacy skills when exiting the literacy intervention?

University of Cape Town

## METHOD

The aim of a method section is to allow evaluators to reproduce similar results using the evaluation procedures outlined. The method section needs to describe the procedures used in the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow for such reproducibility (Pasek, 2012). This programme theory, implementation and short-term outcome evaluation clarified questions regarding programme theory, assessed the literacy intervention's fidelity of implementation and determined whether the implementation of its activities allowed the literacy intervention to achieve its short-term outcomes. The data collection and analysis procedures are presented in this section.

### Design

The evaluation targeted two of the seven schools LMF operates in as the literacy intervention is only implemented at Lourier Primary and Westlake Primary. The three phases of the evaluation required a combination of data collection techniques. A concurrent research design using qualitative and quantitative methods was used (Cameron, 2009). Phase one dealt with the programme theory questions and the organisational support question utilising a semi-structured interview to provide suitable data. Phase two focused on the fidelity of implementation and organisational support for the literacy intervention. A questionnaire for literacy volunteers was administered. Phase three involved an outcome evaluation using programme records as the primary data source.

### Data providers.

Programme documents, a survey of the literacy volunteers and a semi-structured interview with the literacy coordinator provided data for the evaluation. LMF's literacy coordinator provided electronic access to the required literacy intervention's documentation. These documents consisted of the diagnostic test scores from the literacy intervention for 2012.

## **Participants.**

The target population of this evaluation was the programme coordinator and the literacy volunteers. Phase one required the input of the literacy coordinator in a semi-structured interview to provide the necessary qualitative data (n=1).

Phase two involved administering a questionnaire to the literacy volunteers. The literacy volunteers were selected using a convenience sampling approach. Study participants consisted of 34 literacy volunteers (n=34). Volunteers who were participating in the literacy intervention in term three of 2012 were selected for evaluation. Volunteers who were not actively participating in the intervention were excluded. The 34 volunteers selected were the total sample population. The following volunteers were selected per school:

- 19 literacy volunteers working in Lourier Primary School
- 15 literacy volunteers working in Westlake Primary School

## **Measuring instruments.**

A semi-structured interview schedule and a literacy volunteer questionnaire were the measuring instruments used for the evaluation. A semi-structured interview schedule was produced to provide data for phase one of the evaluation (see Appendix B). It was chosen because the type of data required to answer these questions needed to be qualitative and the evaluator needed to produce credible and reliable data while having the opportunity to ask probing questions based on the answers given by the literacy coordinator (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Questions for the interview schedule were adapted from questions obtained in the process of determining the plausibility of LMF's programme theory (see the Plausibility of Programme Theory section).

To determine whether the literacy intervention was implemented as intended, the Shine Centre Training Manual for Learning Partners (Weissenberg et. al., 2009) was adapted into a volunteer questionnaire with 43 questions. The 43 questions were divided into the following five categories: 1) organisational support, 2) preparation, 3) volunteer discipline, 4) learner's discipline and 5) fidelity of implementation of literacy hour. Each category is a necessary

component for the successful implementation of the literacy intervention by the literacy volunteers (Weissenberg et. al., 2009).

Questions one to 41 produced ordinal data as respondents answered each question according to the following scale: Always (100%), Often (75%), Sometimes (50%), Seldom (25%) and Never (0%). This scale was weighted as follows: Always (100%) = 1, Often (75%) = 2, Sometimes (50%) = 3, Seldom (25%) = 4 and Never (0%) = 5. Questions 42 and 43 produced nominal data, as they required 'yes' or 'no' answers. They were weighted as follows: yes = 1 and no = 0.

### **Data collection procedure.**

Research commenced once the evaluator's proposal received clearance from the University of Cape Town's Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research committee. The evaluator corresponded with the programme coordinator to finalise the evaluation questions and a suitable approach for conducting the survey and the structured interview.

It was decided that the literacy coordinator would inform the literacy volunteers that the evaluator would be conducting a voluntary and anonymous survey and that the evaluator would administer the survey at LMF's quarterly volunteer meeting. After the administration of the survey at the quarterly volunteer meeting, the evaluator sent a general email to all volunteers indicating that those volunteers who were not at the quarterly volunteer meeting could contact the evaluator so that he could provide them with the survey hand delivered or via email.

An appointment was also setup with the literacy coordinator so that the structured interview could be conducted with her.

### ***Phase one: the semi-structured interview.***

The semi-structured interview was conducted with the literacy coordinator on August 14, 2012.

*Data analysis.*

The semi-structured interview focused on the following two predetermined categories that were a product of the literature review within the Plausibility of Programme Theory section of this paper: 1) Understanding why LMF targets primary school learners with a specific focus on foundation phase learners; 2) Understanding why LMF implements a certain number of its interventions in each school and not its entire suite of interventions. This interview also focused on the level of organisational support offered to the literacy intervention by LMF.

The semi-structured interview schedule asked probing questions related to these three areas. A deductive thematic analysis of the interview transcript was conducted so that the themes formulated to understand LMF's position was grounded in the data. This process was adapted from an article by Braun and Clarke (2006). The following five steps were followed: 1) the interview was transcribed verbatim (see Appendix C), 2) the transcript was read multiple times, observing any patterns and recurring themes within the data, 3) the patterns and recurring themes were labelled and put into categories, 4) the categories were then divided into primary themes, 5) the findings were reported within the context of the predetermined framework.

***Phase 2: the volunteer literacy questionnaire.***

The evaluator administered the volunteer literacy questionnaire on August 21, 2012 at the quarterly LMF volunteer meeting held at Meadowridge Baptist Church.

*Data analysis.*

Quantitative methods were used to analyse the volunteer literacy questionnaire. Responses to each questionnaire were inputted into a Microsoft Excel spread sheet. This data was then imported to SPSS. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 for Apple Macintosh OS 10.6 (Snow Leopard) was used for all quantitative statistical analyses conducted.

Questions 4 and 37 were reverse scored prior to analysis. The demographic data of the literacy volunteers were not noted as race and gender were not considered to impact the outcome of the evaluation nor were they thought relevant for programme improvement. This could be a limitation of the evaluation as the reading competence of volunteers and how their worldview shapes the reading process could have impacted the effective implementation of literacy hour.

The scales used were not tested for reliability and validity nor was the internal consistency and cohesion of each likert item determined. This was a shortcoming of the design process as doing the aforementioned in the design of a questionnaire using scales is considered good practice (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the five-point scale in questions 1 – 41 and for the two-point scale used in questions 42 – 43. The descriptive statistics of the data set used were the mode and the median. The mode and median were used to measure the central tendency of the ordinal data and the mode for measuring the central tendency of the nominal data. Questions 1 – 42 were considered ordinal data and questions 42 – 43 were considered nominal data.

### ***Phase 3: documentary data.***

The literacy coordinator provided the documentary data required for the short-term outcome evaluation. The data provided was in the form of three sets of diagnostic test scores for grade two learners participating in the evaluation. The test scores were the overall grading from: 1) the diagnostic one test conducted at the end of grade one (2011), 2) the diagnostic one test conducted at the end of term two of grade two (2012) and 3) the diagnostic two test conducted at the end of term four of grade two (2012). The same learners wrote each diagnostic test. The diagnostic one test scores from the end of grade one and the diagnostic two test scores from the end of term four were used for analysis. The diagnostic one test score was used as the base-line (pre-test) score for each learner. A diagnostic two test score of 70 or higher was the needed intervention exit (post-test) score for each learner.

The diagnostic one test and the diagnostic two test were two separate tests used by LMF to measure the progress of learners within the literacy intervention. The diagnostic one test was used to measure grade one literacy levels. The diagnostic two test was used to measure grade two literacy levels. Utilising two separate tests could be considered a limitation of this evaluation, because to obtain a real comparison of improvement of the learners the same diagnostic tests should have been used. However, the same achievement scale was applied by LMF for both tests meaning that a score of 70 or higher in the diagnostic one test and a score of 70 or higher in the diagnostic two test indicated that a learner had achieved an acceptable literacy level for their grade. The results from the two diagnostic tests were still compared, because the Shine literacy intervention model indicates that this process should be followed by LMF when measuring the progress of learners in the intervention.

#### *Data analysis.*

Quantitative methods were used to analyse the diagnostic test scores. Test scores were inputted into a Microsoft Excel spread sheet. This data was then imported to SPSS. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 for Apple Macintosh OS 10.6 (Snow Leopard) was used for all quantitative statistical analyses conducted.

The means of the diagnostic one test scores and the diagnostic two test scores were being compared within the same group to determine whether the difference in mean scores from pre-test to post-test were significant for the same grade two participants. A within-groups paired-samples t-test was used to determine the difference between the mean scores. A within-groups paired-samples t-test is a statistical method used to compare two means scores from the same participants (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). This t-test measured whether the pre- and post-test means were significantly different. A t-test is an hypothesis test and requires the use of a null and research hypothesis (Nolan & Heinzen, 2008). The null hypothesis for this paired-samples t-test is that: the learners who write the diagnostic one test will achieve the same score in the diagnostic two test –  $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$ . The research hypothesis is that: the learners who write the diagnostic one test will achieve a higher score in the diagnostic two test –  $H_1: \mu_1 < \mu_2$ .

The results chapter which follows presents the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data analyses as discussed in this chapter.

## RESULTS

The findings from the programme theory, implementation and short-term outcome evaluation are presented in this chapter. These findings are presented in order of each phase as described in the methods chapter. The grade two classes of Lourier Primary and Westlake Primary for the year 2012 were the focus of the implementation and short-term outcome evaluations.

### **Phase One: The Semi-structured Interview.**

The semi-structured interview conducted with the literacy coordinator aimed to provide qualitative data to better understand: 1) LMF's concept of an holistic primary school programme; 2) why the literacy intervention targeted foundation phase learners; and 3) if LMF offered the literacy intervention sufficient organisational support.

#### **An holistic intervention approach.**

The following two themes were noted after conducting a thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview with the literacy coordinator. LMF uses an "as needed" and a "resource determined" strategy when deciding which interventions to implement in each school. By "as needed" it is meant that they implement the interventions as needed or requested for by the school. This approach takes precedence over implementing their suite of five interventions as required by LMF's programme theory. LMF does not dictate what interventions a school should utilise even when all five interventions are required in a school.

LMF combines a "resource determined" approach with its "as needed" approach. LMF is bound by resource limitations and needs to decide which interventions it is able to implement dependent on its available resources. LMF cannot always implement the literacy intervention in a school, because it is the most expensive of LMF's five interventions to initially setup and requires the most number of volunteers. In contrast, its life skills and/or counselling intervention are comparatively simple to setup, are not as resource intensive and require fewer volunteers. For example, the literacy intervention in Westlake Primary uses 13 volunteers and in Lourier Primary

uses 26 volunteers, while the counselling interventions in Westlake Primary and Lourier Primary uses three volunteers per school (LifeMatters Foundation, 2012). The life skills and counselling interventions are more regularly set up in a school if there are not sufficient resources to set up the literacy intervention as requested by a school.

The findings in this section indicate that LMF's programme consisting of five interventions constitute a holistic primary school programme, but in practice implementing their theoretically sound holistic programme is limited by the needs of the schools they work in and LMF's resource constraints.

### **Targeting foundation phase learners.**

To understand why the literacy intervention targeted foundation phase learners exclusively, a thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview was conducted. It was found that LMF's decision to target foundation phase learners with its literacy intervention was influenced by: 1) LMF historically targeting primary schools; 2) LMF discovering a problem of illiteracy in the primary schools it was working in; and 3) LMF's opinion of the age children learn to read in South Africa.

Historically, LMF targeted primary schools with its life skills intervention. As LMF operated in primary schools, it noticed that learners in these schools required support in multiple areas. As it expanded its range of interventions, it found that the problem of illiteracy was prevalent in many of the schools it operated in. In response to this need, it introduced its literacy intervention as a part of its portfolio of interventions within the primary schools it was operating in.

The thematic analysis further indicated that the literacy intervention targets grades two and three foundation phase learners because LMF is of the opinion that children in South Africa only start to learn to read in grade one and it is only apparent what reading problems these learners were facing by the end of grade one.

### **Organisational support.**

To determine whether the literacy intervention was receiving sufficient support from LMF to successfully implement the intervention, the semi-structured interview included questions focusing on organisational support. A thematic analysis of the responses to these questions indicated LMF offered the literacy intervention sufficient support for it to successfully operate with the exception of funding. In 2012, the literacy intervention had obtained its own funding separate from LMF, which was sufficient for it to operate. In 2013 the literacy intervention is planning to expand and would require funding from LMF to manage this expansion. This finding indicates that LMF in 2013 will be required to supply the literacy intervention with funding, which it did not do in 2012.

### **Phase Two: The Volunteer Literacy Questionnaire.**

The volunteer literacy questionnaire assessed whether the literacy intervention was implemented as intended by the literacy volunteers. It did this by determining if the processes and actions required of the volunteers by the main components of the literacy intervention were satisfactorily met. The questionnaire was divided into five core categories, each with its own subcomponents that were required for the successful implementation of the literacy intervention. A mode of one for each of the five categories indicated that the literacy intervention was being implemented as intended by the volunteers. A decision rule was taken that, if any category achieved a median or mode of two or higher, those specific categories' descriptive statistics would be presented in detail to indicate how the intervention could improve in that area. The evaluator conducted no observations of the literacy volunteers during the implementation of literacy hour. All findings in this section are determined through a self-report process by the volunteers. A self-report process has the following limitations which may impact the validity of the results: 1) the data is from the respondent's perspective and may not resemble reality as observed by an evaluator, 2) the respondent may not provide the required or sufficient detail and 3) the respondent may not have filled in the questionnaire truthfully thereby influencing the data in a positive or negative manner (Barker, Pistrang & Elliot, 2005).

### Implementation as intended.

25 of 34 literacy volunteers responded to the literacy volunteer questionnaire. One questionnaire was removed before analysis of the data due to it being incompletely filled out. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for each category including the mean, median and mode.

Table 3

*Summary of descriptive statistics: implementation as intended*

	Organisational Support	Preparation	Volunteer Discipline	Learner Discipline	Fidelity of Implementation
Mean	1.42	1.40	1.81	1.75	2.04
Median	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00
Mode	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1
Std. Deviation	1.139	1.00	1.451	.769	1.356
Variance	1.297	.999	2.105	.592	1.839
Kurtosis	7.659	7.001	.546	-.348	.162
Skewness	2.921	2.764	1.505	.667	1.191

The data returned by the questionnaire is ordinal data. The best measures of central tendency to analyse ordinal data are the median and the mode (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Razavieh, 2010). The mode for each category is one, which according to the likert scales used indicates the literacy intervention is been implemented as intended. The median is one for the following three categories: organisation support, preparation and volunteer discipline. This reaffirms that the performance of volunteers in these three categories is as intended. A median of 2.00 in the learner discipline and fidelity of implementation categories indicate that the volunteers are generally implementing these categories as intended, but there is room for improvement as the ideal median for each of these categories is one. The descriptive statistics for each likert item for the likert scales learner discipline and fidelity of implementation will be presented to indicate which processes or activities have not been implemented strictly as intended.

### *Learner discipline.*

Questions 20, 21 and 22 of the literacy volunteer questionnaire represent the three likert items which made up the likert scale measuring learner discipline. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for these likert items including the mean, median and mode.

Table 4

*Summary of descriptive statistics: learner discipline*

	Question 20	Question 21	Question 22
Mean	2.38	1.71	1.21
Median	2.00	2.00	1.00
Mode	2.00	1.00	1.00
Std. Deviation	.576	.806	.415
Variance	.332	.650	.172
Kurtosis	-.683	1.369	.377
Skewness	-.210	1.147	1.534

Question 20 measures whether the volunteers are able to settle the learners down and get them to focus quickly on the tasks at hand for literacy hour. The ability of the volunteers to achieve this is an important part of having a productive literacy hour with each learner (Weissenberg et. al., 2009). Question 20 returned a median and mode of 2.00 indicating that volunteers often but not always achieve this in each literacy hour.

It is required of the volunteers that each literacy hour be managed in a disciplined manner and that volunteers discipline problematic students in a constructive manner. Question 21 measures whether each volunteer, when necessary, disciplines their learners in a constructive manner during literacy hour. The mode for this likert item is 1.00, the mean is 1.71 and the median is 2.00, which indicates that volunteers often but do not always discipline learners constructively in each literacy hour.

Question 22 measures whether volunteers reinforce learners' good behaviour quickly in literacy hour. Question 22 achieved a median and mode of one, which indicates volunteers almost always do this and so this area of learner discipline does not need improvement.

***Fidelity of implementation.***

Questions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 25, 26, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 of the literacy volunteer questionnaire represent the 20 likert items which made up the likert scale measuring fidelity of implementation. Table 5, 5.1 & 5.2 present the descriptive statistics for these likert items including the mean, median and mode.

Table 5

*Summary of descriptive statistics: fidelity of implementation*

	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
Mean	2.38	2.54	1.50	2.29	1.54	1.33	1.42	1.17	1.29
Median	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Mode	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Std. Deviation	1.279	1.351	.590	1.488	.884	.565	.776	.381	.464
Variance	1.636	1.824	.348	2.216	.781	.319	.601	.145	.216
Kurtosis	.187	-.366	-.401	-.532	.472	1.626	4.668	1.792	-1.145
Skewness	.984	.712	.694	.918	1.513	1.522	2.133	1.910	-.979

Table 5.1

*Summary of descriptive statistics: fidelity of implementation*

	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q25	Q26	Q30	Q32	Q33
Mean	1.71	1.88	1.79	1.92	1.04	1.21	1.63	1.92	3.08
Median	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00
Mode	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00
Std. Deviation	.464	.797	.721	.830	.204	.509	1.377	1.558	1.213
Variance	.216	.636	.520	.688	.042	.259	1.897	2.428	1.471
Kurtosis	-1.145	.739	-.911	.139	24.00	6.258	2.776	.184	-.389
Skewness	-.979	.798	.340	.662	4.899	2.539	2.058	1.354	-.013

Table 5.2

*Summary of descriptive statistics: fidelity of implementation*

	Q34	Q35	Q36
Mean	4.71	2.42	4.17
Median	5.00	2.50	5.00
Mode	5.00	1.00	5.00
Std. Deviation	.908	1.381	1.435
Variance	.824	1.906	2.058
Kurtosis	13.023	-.681	.262
Skewness	-3.538	.567	-1.378

Questions 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 25, 26, 30 and 32 returned a mean and a median of 1.00 for each question. This result indicates that no programme improvement is needed in the areas of fidelity of implementation these likert items were measuring.

Question 10 returned a mode of 1.00, a median of 2.00 and a mean of 2.29. It measured whether the volunteers base their literacy hour on the learner's performance from the previous week. This would indicate that volunteers often, but do not always base their literacy hour on the previous week's performance of their learners. The frequency of responses indicate that eight of the volunteers responded with a score of three or higher which indicates that of the volunteers who responded to the questionnaire 33% of them at best only sometimes base literacy hour on their learner's performance in the previous week's literacy hour.

Question 35 returned a mode of 1.00, a median of 2.50 and a mean of 2.42. It measured whether the volunteers write a sentence about each learner after literacy hour indicating how the learner was able to retain new knowledge from the session. This would indicate that volunteers often, but not always write this sentence. The frequency of responses indicate that 11 of the volunteers responded with a score of three or higher which indicates that of the volunteers who responded to the questionnaire 46% of them at best only sometimes write a sentence after literacy hour indicating how each learner was able to retain new knowledge from the session.

Question 33 returned a mode of 3.00, a median of 3.00 and a mean of 3.08. It measured whether the volunteers write a sentence about each learner after literacy hour indicating how the learner behaved in the session. This would indicate that volunteers sometimes write this sentence. The

frequency of responses indicate that 17 of the volunteers responded with a score of three or higher which indicates that of the volunteers who responded to the questionnaire 71% of them at best only sometimes write a sentence after literacy hour indicating how each learner behaved in the session.

Question 34 returned a mode of 5.00, a median of 5.00 and a mean score of 4.71. It measured whether the volunteers write a sentence about each learner's appearance after literacy hour. This would indicate that volunteers almost never write this sentence. The frequency of responses indicate that 21 of the volunteers responded with a score of five which indicates that of the volunteers who responded to the questionnaire 88% of them never write a sentence after literacy hour describing each learners appearance.

Question 36 returned a mode of 5.00, a median of 5.00 and a mean score of 4.17. It measured whether the volunteers write a paragraph at the end of each term about working with each learner. This would indicate that volunteers almost never write this paragraph. The frequency of responses indicate that 17 of the volunteers responded with a score of five which indicates that of the volunteers who responded to the questionnaire 71% of them never write a paragraph at the end of each term about working with each learner

### ***Organisational support.***

Questions 38, 42 and 43 were included in the volunteer literacy questionnaire to determine whether the literacy volunteers receive sufficient support from the literacy intervention. Question 38 produced ordinal data. The median and mode were used to analyse the data from this question. Questions 42 and 43 produced nominal data. Frequency and ratio measures were used to analyse the data.

Questions 38 determined whether the volunteers felt that the literacy intervention's centre managers were available to them when they faced challenges when running literacy hour. It returned a mode of 1.00 and a median of 1.00. This would indicate that the centre managers are available to them when they faced challenges running literacy hour. The frequency of responses

indicate that 20 of the volunteers responded with a score of one which indicates that of the volunteers who responded to the questionnaire 83% of them felt sufficiently supported by the centre managers.

Question 42 measured how many volunteers received the Shine Centre Training Manual for Learning Partners. 14 of 24 volunteers answered yes to this question, meaning 58% of volunteers surveyed had received a manual.

Question 43 measured whether volunteers felt they had received sufficient training to implement literacy hour. 20 of 24 volunteers answered yes to this question, meaning 83% of volunteers surveyed felt they had received sufficient training to successfully implement literacy hour.

### **Phase Three: Literacy Skills Improvement**

A paired samples t-test was performed on the literacy test scores from the diagnostic one test administered at the end of grade and the test scores from the diagnostic two test administered to the same learners at the end of grade two. This test was administered to determine whether the grade two learners participating in the literacy intervention achieved statistically significant improvement in their literacy grades. A paired samples t-test was performed, as this is a within-groups design hypothesis test and measured whether the pre- and post-test mean scores were significantly different.

This was a two-tailed test with a p level of 0.05 and a *df* of 36 (*df* = N-1). Utilising a distribution table, the critical values were -2.02 and 2.02. The calculated test statistic was 5.408. The results were as follows:  $t(35) = 5.408$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The null hypothesis is rejected because the learners who wrote the diagnostic one test did achieve higher scores in the diagnostic two test.

The mean difference between the diagnostic two and diagnostic one scores is 12.757. This means that an average learner participating in the literacy intervention will show an increase of 12.757 points when doing the diagnostic two test. According to the significance score of 0.000, this is statistically significant because 0.000 is less than the set p value of 0.05. These results appear to indicate that LMF's literacy intervention is producing results which are statistically significant

indicating, that the learners' literacy grades are improving. A control group from the same or a similar school of the same age group and level of learner should have been used to determine if the statistically significant improvement in the diagnostic two scores could more confidently be attributed to LMF's literacy intervention (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). The lack of a control group is considered a limitation of this evaluation.

### **Grade appropriate literacy skills.**

Does an average increase of 12.757 points per student on the diagnostic test two score at the end of the grade two literacy programme equate to an acceptable improvement in the literacy grades of the grade two learners? Statistically, the paired samples t-test indicates that this improvement is statistically significant. However, this finding does not indicate whether the students have achieved grade appropriate literacy proficiency. When looking at the diagnostic test two scores mean it is clear that on average students in this programme improved to a mean score of 35.41, which is less than a grade two appropriate score. LMF's short-term outcome is for grade two participants to achieve grade two appropriate literacy levels by the end of grade two. Grade two appropriate levels are measured by a score of 71 in a diagnostic two test. Utilising the available data it is clear that LMF is not achieving its goal despite the statistically significant increase in learner results over time.

## **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **An Holistic Intervention Approach**

The literature review indicated that foundation phase educational programmes aimed at ensuring foundation that phase learners succeed at school in the long term, i.e. pass grade 12, need to implement holistic programmes involving literacy training, numeracy training, emotional support, parental support and supplying learners with adequate nutrition. All five of these components need to be implemented simultaneously to ensure the success of foundation phase learners in the short, medium and long term (Department of Education, 2005; Gardener, 2008; Gross, 2008; McDonald, 1999; Springate, Atkinson, Straw, Lamont & Grayson, 2008; Weare, 2008).

A preliminary review of LMF's documentary data indicated that LMF had a theoretically sound educational programme that had a suite of five interventions that covered the five core components of a foundation phase educational programme. This preliminary review further indicated that LMF was not implementing all five of its interventions in each school, which undermined the theoretically sound foundation of LMF's educational programme. The results section found that LMF did not implement all of its interventions in each school for two reasons. Firstly, LMF utilised an 'as needed' approach that allowed schools to select the interventions they felt were necessary in their schools. Secondly, this 'as needed' approach was dependent on sufficient funding being available to implement the interventions chosen by the school. If there was not sufficient funding for the chosen intervention, LMF's more cost effective interventions were implemented. This approach resulted in LMF not implementing all of its interventions in each school it worked in, which undermined the overall effectiveness of its programme.

### **Recommendations.**

Because the literature suggests that improving foundation phase learners' educational outcomes is linked to implementing holistic educational interventions, it is recommended that LMF reformulate its approach in the following was: 1) build programme capacity, 2) increase funding,

3) renegotiate existing contracts with schools and 4) redevelop its strategy when approaching schools for the first time.

LMF aims to maintain its programme in its existing schools that it works in and in future it will expand its programme to prospective schools (L. Oosthuizen, personal communication, August 17, 2012). Before it expands to prospective schools, it is suggested that LMF increase its funding and programme capacity so that it has the ability to offer all five of its interventions to the schools it is currently operating in. It is then suggested that LMF try and renegotiate its working agreement to include all five of its interventions within the schools it currently works in. Once it achieves this, it should only then consider approaching prospective schools to take on its programme. LMF's strategy when approaching any prospective schools should indicate that it only implements its programme in its entirety.

### **Organisational Support**

Evaluation theory indicated that organisational support is essential to the successful implementation of an intervention (Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman, 2004). This evaluation aimed to determine organisational support in two ways. Firstly, whether LMF was offering the literature intervention sufficient organisational support to successfully operate. Secondly, it aimed to determine whether the literacy volunteers were receiving sufficient support from the literacy intervention.

In the first instance, the literacy coordinator indicated that the literacy intervention received all the necessary support it needed to successfully function. It did not require funding from LMF in 2012, but would need funding in 2013 as it planned to expand the literacy intervention into more schools.

In the second instance, the literacy questionnaire aimed to measure whether the literacy volunteers felt sufficiently supported by the literacy intervention and whether each volunteer received the literacy training manual. The literacy volunteer questionnaire indicated that the volunteers felt sufficiently supported by their centre managers when implementing literacy hour

each week. The centre manager was their primary and direct source of support as they implemented literacy hour.

The literacy intervention offered volunteers limited training prior to them observing other volunteers implement the literacy hour for one or two weeks. Once this process had been completed the new volunteer would start implementing literacy hour on his or her own each week. Key to the success of this process was the literacy-training manual each volunteer needed to receive in order for them to have concrete guidelines and processes to rely on as they became more adept at implementing literacy hour. The result section indicated that of the 24 volunteers who participated in the literacy questionnaire only 58% of them had received a training manual. This is a cause for concern, because this training manual is a step-by-step guide of what is needed to successfully run a literacy hour. Research has indicated that foundation phase educational interventions based on sound theory are the most successful when the core components of the interventions are implemented strictly as intended (Bryant, Bryant, Roberts, Vaughn, Pfannenstiel, Porterfield & Gersten, 2011). It is the opinion of this evaluation that due to the limited training offered to new volunteers that it would be difficult for these volunteers to learn how to implement literacy hour strictly as intended without receiving the literacy training manual.

### **Recommendations.**

It is recommended that the literacy intervention firstly ensure that each volunteer receive a training manual before receiving training and, secondly, that it be required of all volunteers to have read the training manual before receiving training or observing more experienced volunteers implement literacy hour. By insisting on this, each new volunteer will have a stronger theoretical understanding of what literacy hour should involve and so be able to filter what they learn in training and in observation onto a foundation that is informed by the training manual.

## **Fidelity of Implementation**

The results of the fidelity of the implementation section indicated that LMF is successfully implementing the literacy hour generally, but the volunteers are not sufficiently succeeding with the following processes as discussed in the results section:

- they do not always base their literacy hour on the previous week's performance of their learners;
- they do not write weekly evaluation sentences: 1) on the learner's ability to retain new knowledge, 2) on the learner's behaviour and 3) on the learners appearance; and
- they do not write a general paragraph about the learner at the end of each term.

This would appear to indicate that there is a disconnection between what the literacy training manual indicates is proper process, what is taught in training and what volunteers learn when observing more experienced volunteers. When this argument is coupled with the finding that only 58% of the volunteers surveyed received a training manual, a core part of the problem could be that not all volunteers receive the training manual and that it may not be utilised properly in training. This could lead to the volunteers not following proper processes.

### **Recommendations.**

It is recommended that the literacy intervention ensure that all volunteers receive the literacy training manual prior to receiving training, that volunteer training be based systematically on the training manual and that any monitoring of the performances of the literacy volunteers be based on the literacy training manual.

## **Literacy Skills Improvement**

Despite the evidence provided that the literacy intervention is generally implemented as intended the results section indicated that the literacy intervention did not achieve its short-term goal of grade two learners achieving grade appropriate literacy levels in 2012. The literacy interventions theory indicates that most learners do need to achieve grade appropriate literacy skills at the end

of grade two for them to successfully pass grade three. This result was obtained from only focusing on the literacy interventions success in 2012 and so it cannot be concluded definitively that the literacy intervention does not achieve its short-term outcome. A wider analysis including the last few year's results would need to be conducted to confirm this or conclude that this result was an anomaly.

The lack of such an analysis is considered a limitation of this evaluation. Such an analysis could have indicated whether the performance of learners in the 2012 literacy intervention were consistent with the performance of learners in previous years. Regularly analysing data each year in relation to previous years could provide valuable insight into longitudinal trends in the performance of the literacy intervention.

### **Recommendations.**

It is recommended that LMF conduct an analysis of all the literacy results of the last three years which would be when LMF started keeping accurate records of the literacy intervention's results (L. Oosthuizen, personal communication, August 17, 2012). This would allow LMF to see if learners not achieving grade appropriate literacy skills are consistent over time. If this analysis indicates that this is a consistent trend it is then recommended that LMF conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the implementation of literacy hour as this evaluation did not observe the implementation of literacy hour by the volunteers. If through this evaluation it is found that literacy hour is implemented with fidelity it is recommended that LMF ensure the Shine Centre's literacy model is suitable for the learners LMF is working with.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This evaluation has possibly made the following contribution to knowledge. It has argued that implementing a holistic programme to improve the schooling outcomes of foundation phase learners is central to the success of foundation phase educational programmes. If this is true, as literature has indicated, it has implications for educational programmes that implement a solitary intervention in schools. Further research focusing on the effectiveness of holistic educational

programmes in South Africa is needed.

## **Limitations**

This evaluation had the following six primary limitations:

- 1) The scales used in the volunteer questionnaire were not tested for reliability and validity and so it can only be assumed that they were effective at measuring whether the literacy intervention was implemented as intended.
- 2) No demographic data was collected of the volunteers. The volunteers' backgrounds may have influenced their reading competence and their worldview may have shaped their understanding of the reading process which could have impacted the effective implementation of literacy hour by each volunteer,
- 3) The t-test used to compare the mean scores of the diagnostic one and diagnostic two scores of learners compared the mean scores of two different tests using the same achievement scale. This could be considered a limitation, because to measure improvement the same tests needed to be used as pre and post-tests. The literacy intervention used by LMF requires the use of two separate diagnostic tests using the same achievement scale. This evaluation compared the test scores provided by LMF as the evaluator did not have the capacity to administer additional literacy pre and post-tests to determine if the learners improved their literacy skills.
- 4) A control group of learners from the same school, learning level and age group should have been used to determine if the statistically significant improvement in the diagnostic test two scores could confidently be attributed to LMF's literacy intervention.
- 5) No observations of the volunteers implementing literacy hour were conducted to confirm that what the volunteers were self-reporting via the volunteer questionnaire was accurate.
- 6) Service utilisation by the learners of literacy hour was not measured. Measuring this is

important to determine how service utilisation could have impacted the literacy intervention not achieving its short-term outcomes for grade two learners in 2012.

## **Conclusion**

Many foundation phase learners in public schools of the Western Cape have poor literacy skills (Grant, 2009) and these learners are in need of assistance to improve their literacy skills. Organisations such as LMF play an important role in helping these learners. In fulfilling this role it is important that their programmes are based on relevant evidence and that they implement their programmes in accordance with this available evidence. If they do this their chance of success is greatly increased.

LMF's programme theory proposes that it implement a holistic programme in each of the schools it works with. Research indicated that LMF's holistic programme theory is theoretically sound and if properly implemented LMF would be able to meet the educational, emotional, decision making and nutritional needs of learners in the primary schools it works with. This evaluation found that LMF does not implement its holistic programme comprising its five interventions in each school it works with due to resources constraints faced by LMF as well as the specific requirements of each school which do not always see the need for all five interventions.

The specific focus of the evaluation of LMF was: 1) to determine if its literacy intervention was implemented as intended in Lourier Primary and Westlake Primary and 2) to determine if each learner achieved grade appropriate literacy skills as determined by LMF's diagnostic one and diagnostic two tests administered to each learner.

To measure whether LMF did implement its literacy intervention as intended in Lourier Primary and Westlake Primary the evaluator administered a self-report survey to the literacy volunteers working in each school to determine if literacy hour was implemented as intended by each volunteer. Literacy hour is the primary tool used by LMF to improve the literacy of the learners participating in the literacy intervention. The findings from the self-report survey indicated that the literacy volunteers were generally implementing literacy hour as intended. It was found that

the literacy volunteers need to more consistently base each literacy hour session with each learner on the progress the learner made in his/her previous literacy hour session. A further finding was that literacy volunteers need to improve their weekly and termly reporting of learner progress.

A t-test that compared the mean scores of the diagnostic one test administered to learners at the start of the literacy intervention and the mean scores of the diagnostic two test administered at the end of the literacy intervention indicated that the diagnostic two test mean scores were 12.757 points better than the diagnostic one test scores. On average each learner showed statistically significant improvement in their literacy scores indicating that LMF's literacy intervention was improving learners' literacy skills. The mean score of the diagnostic two test was 35.41 which was 34.59 points below the literacy intervention's exit score for learners of 70. This indicates that the 12.757 increase in points on the diagnostic two test in comparison to the diagnostic one test score is insufficient for the literacy intervention to meet its goal of improving learners' literacy skills to grade appropriate levels by the end of grade two.

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## APPENDIX A: LITERACY VOLUNTEER QUESTIONNAIRE



University of Cape Town

Faculty of Commerce

### Literacy Volunteer Questionnaire

**Title of research project:** A theory and implementation evaluation of LifeMatters Foundation's (LMF) literacy and numeracy projects.

**Name of principal researcher:** Denver Grigg

**Nature of evaluation:** This study evaluates the implementation of LMF's numeracy and literacy interventions.

#### Participant's involvement:

- You will be required to answer an anonymous questionnaire.
- The questionnaire will be delivered to you and collected by the researcher.
- There are no known risks for participants taking part.
- You are able to withdraw from participating in this questionnaire at any point.
- By contributing your time and answering this questionnaire you will assist LMF to reflect on the implementation process.

All responses may be used for programme improvement, educational and research purposes. Demographic details required to assist with data analysis may be included in the research.

This study has received approval from the Ethics in Research Committee of the Commerce Faculty at the University of Cape Town

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University of Cape Town

## LITERACY PROJECT

Please show how much you agree with each of the following statements by ticking a number from 1 to 5. <i>Key:</i> Always (100%), Often (75%), Sometimes (50%), Seldom (25%) Never (0%).		Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1	There is a suitable room for me to run literacy hour with my learners.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I arrive punctually for each literacy hour.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I wear my name badge during each session.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I get into conversations with teachers at the school I volunteer.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I prepare for each session by choosing <b>all</b> of the following items and placing them on my desk: books, games and have-a-go writing materials.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I have access to instructions for the games used in literacy hour.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I implement each literacy session with two learners.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Each learner participates in literacy hour twice per week.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I base each learner's session on his or her performance.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I base each learner's session on his or her evaluation chart from the previous session.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I work with the same learners throughout the duration of the intervention.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Each literacy session consists of word play.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Each literacy session consists of have-a-go-writing.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Each literacy session consists of paired reading.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Each literacy session consists of shared reading	1	2	3	4	5
16	I spend 15 minutes doing word play in each session.	1	2	3	4	5

17	I spend 15 minutes doing have-a-go-writing in each session.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I spend 15 minutes doing paired reading in each session.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I spend 15 minutes doing shared reading in each session.	1	2	3	4	5
20	The learners settle down and focus quickly each literacy hour.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I discipline the learners' behaviour and not them personally when they misbehave.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I reinforce a learner's good behaviour quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
23	There is a praise box at each literacy centre.	1	2	3	4	5
24	The praise box contains colourful paper off-cuts.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I write a compliment on a slip of paper at the end of each lesson for each learner.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I include the name of the learner in the praise sentence.	1	2	3	4	5
27	After my session, I ensure that the desk is neat and tidy for the next session.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I return the literacy session materials to the relevant storage place at the end of each session.	1	2	3	4	5
29	The games file has a checklist for me to keep track of each learner's progress and the games that each learner plays.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I use the checklist to keep track of the games that each learner has played and the progress they are making.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I have a notebook to jot down observations regarding my learner's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
32	After each literacy hour I write down a sentence regarding each learner in the notebook.	1	2	3	4	5
33	The sentence focuses on the learner's behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5
34	The sentence focuses on the learner's appearance.	1	2	3	4	5
35	The sentence focuses on the learner's ability to retain new knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5

36	At the end of each term I write a paragraph about the learners I am working with.	1	2	3	4	5
37	I give gifts to the learners I work with.	1	2	3	4	5
38	The literacy centre manager is available to me when I face challenges or problems.	1	2	3	4	5
39	I SMS the literacy centre manager when I am going to miss a session.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I give one weeks notice when I am going to be away from the programme for an extended period.	1	2	3	4	5
41	When I am unable to take a literacy hour I make arrangements with two volunteer shine buddies to take my literacy hour.	1	2	3	4	5
Please show how much you agree with each of the following statements by either selecting Yes or No.		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>			
42	I received a Shine Centre Training Manual for Learning Partners.	Yes	No			
43	I received adequate training to successfully implement literacy hour.	Yes	No			

## APPENDIX B: LITERACY COORDINATOR INTERVIEW OUTLINE



University of Cape Town

Faculty of Commerce

### Literacy Coordinator Interview Outline

**Title of research project:** A theory and implementation evaluation of LifeMatters Foundation's (LMF) literacy and numeracy projects.

**Name of principal researcher:** Denver Grigg

**Nature of evaluation:** This study evaluates the implementation of LMF's numeracy and literacy interventions.

**Participant's involvement:**

- You will be required to participate in a personnel interview.
- The researcher will conduct the interview.
- There are no risks for participants taking part.
- You are able to withdraw from this personnel interview at any point.
- By contributing your time you will assist LMF to reflect on the implementation process.
- All responses will be used for educational purposes and research only.
- Demographic details required to assist with data analysis may be included in the research.
- Any information of a personal nature will be kept anonymous.

**Declaration:**

I have read and understand the section titled “Participant’s involvement” and have had the opportunity to ask the researcher questions. I..... am willing to participate in this interview and give permission that the information provided through this interview may be used for programme improvement, educational and research purposes.

Signed.....

Date:.....

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University of Cape Town

**Programme Theory Questions**

1. Why did LMF choose to operate in primary schools?

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1.1. Has LMF ever considered operating in preschools?

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1.2. If LMF has considered operating in preschools, why does it not operate in preschools?

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2. Does LMF intend to implement all five of its interventions in each school?

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2.1. Why does LMF not do that currently?

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3. How important is VMI to the success of the literacy and numeracy intervention?

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3.1. If VMI is not a core activity of the literacy and numeracy intervention, what is the reasoning for this decision?

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4. Describe the parental workshops that LMF hosts?

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4.1. What is the purpose of the parental workshops?

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4.2. What activities occur during the parental workshops?

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4.3. Who participates in the parental workshops?

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4.4. How regularly are parental workshops held?

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5. LMF also operates in schools that perform well academically and whose learners would be considered middle class. What is LMF hoping to achieve in these schools?

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**Organisational Support Questions**

6. Did each intervention receive sufficient funding from LMF to adequately operate?

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6.1. Provide motivation for your answer in question six.

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7. Was each intervention supplied with enough volunteers to ensure there was one volunteer for every two children participating in the intervention?

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8. Was sufficient support offered to each intervention in the training of volunteers?

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8.1. Provide motivation for your answer in question eight.

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9. Did each intervention receive sufficient administrative support to effectively coordinate its activities and volunteers?

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9.1. Provide motivation for your answer in question nine.

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## APPENDIX C: LITERACY COORDINATOR INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

### Programme Theory Questions

1. Why did LMF choose to operate in primary schools?

Okay, there are quite a few reasons. The first reason is that LMF is in primary schools. So they happened to already be working in primary schools when they found the problem of children not being able to read. And then when they looked for the programme, they looked for a programme that worked in primary schools. So, they did not look for a preschool programme. There are programmes in preschool that are really good, but at the moment in South Africa children learn to read in grade one. And we are trying to find out which children at the end of grade one did not learn to read. There are a whole bunch of things you can do in preschool that will help a child eventually in grade R read, but the actual year that in South Africa that children actually learn to read is grade one. So then we want to see which ones did not understand the process and in grade two help those ones.

a. Has LMF ever considered operating in preschools?

As far as I know they have not. You can run other programme's in preschool, but we have not looked at doing the other programme's in preschool.

b. If LMF has considered operating in preschools, why does it not operate in preschools?

[See response in question one.]

c. Why do you not operate a literacy intervention in grades higher than grade three?

I do not know. I am not actually a remedial teacher myself so I do not know exactly the theory, but as far as I can tell that age [foundation phase] is the age where they learn as much as they can and they learn very quickly. Even by grade three they are learning slower and in grade four/five. So then to take an older child and teach them those foundation things is harder and also because foundation phase is called foundation phase, because it is laying the foundation for grade four, grade five, grade six. In grade four, they do not teach children to read anymore. So, if you cannot read in grade four you missed it. [In the higher grades] you have to do geography, history, maths and the rest of it.

2. Does LMF intend to implement all five of its interventions in each school?

No

- a. Why does LMF not do that currently?

LMF they implement as needed, generally. They started off with counseling. So counseling and it is an easy system to setup. You just need two or three counselors and you go into a new school. And so they have set that up and it does not matter if a child is rich or poor they need counseling, they need life skills. So, they do those anywhere, because those two programmes you can do anywhere. Where as a child in Sweet Valley [Primary] does not need help with literacy. So it is also the needs of the school, but the children in Retreat need help with literacy and it is also quite expensive to setup a programme. The literacy programme is probably the most expensive to setup and it has the most volunteers. We have forty volunteers now. So it is one of the bigger ones. So you cannot set up too many, because it is costly and a lot of admin, a lot of volunteers we have not got yet.

- b. How does LMF determine what interventions are going to be in a school?

So if the [the school] have approached us. Normally they approach us. We have not got to a point where we are approaching other schools at the moment. Kamesh [the programme coordinator] normally goes in and explains the different programmes we do. We have had a few that have asked for specific programmes, but we do not have the capacity to do them, but we will know about the school and we will help them as much as we can. Some schools really do one or two programmes only.

- c. Do you think the decision to implement specific programmes in schools is based on the needs of the school or the principal and the teachers and what they feel they want?

It is probably more the principal and the teachers what they feel they want, because we have counseling which they need, but it actually makes more admin for the principals and the teachers, because it brings out more problems so then they do not want it anymore. So, it is not really the needs of the school.

- d. In an ideal situation how would you envision this working?

I do not know, but I would still probably feel that the school would have to decide what they want, because a lot of NGO's throw projects at people and they do not always need it. You do not want to give them something they do not need. You can go into a school and do a massive fun day, but what they actually needed was you to fix the desks and the classroom. You do not want to do something that actually do not need or give them a whole bunch of jackets or whatever.

3. Do you hold parental workshops with the parents of learners?

Not as yet. We want to. Shine do and they have said that they will come to do them for LMF, but we have not yet. Shine have done them in the past with their schools. We have been to watch them do it and they said they would do it with us. They do it with grade R and grade

one [parents]. So that the parents by the time they have reached grade two hopefully have helped them.

4. What is the point of having a parental workshop at a school?

For a literacy programme there are obviously different workshops. For a literacy programme they talk to parents about affirming their kids, because a lot of kids get shouted at when they do not read correctly or well. And just asking them how they felt when they read if anyone read to them [when they were children]. Helping the parents feel for the child. They explain to them that they only have to spend four minutes a day reading with the child and that will help them read. Plus it also gives them time with their child. So it almost helps the parent child relationship as well as the literacy side. Then they give them practical things so they have given them sheets of alphabet and they can do eye spy and they can do I think bingo and they taught them how to take newspapers and cut them out. You know take the Pick 'n Pay [flyer] and cut out toothpaste and whatever and learn those words. I think most parents just do not know. Especially in those areas some of the parents are illiterate themselves and some of them just have not a clue what to do with their child. Obviously grade R and grade one children are learning even more than in grade two. Or actually in preschool they learn the most. So the more that the parents can give them at that age the better.

5. Is this all that happens in the parental workshops?

That is mostly it. Some of what we do, paired and shared reading where they read with them and where they read to them. Games that they can play and then just general rules about how to encourage a child to read. You know take them to the library let them read stop signs, store signs, those kind of things. They only do a one day workshop. It is like four hours or something.

a. Are the parental workshops only for the parents of the children in the intervention?

In grade one and grade R, yes. The school we are at now have not done it, because they have done the Words Works one [parental workshop] which is an eight week thing. It is a different type of programme. They do eight weeks with the parents and then those parents they are supposed teach the other parents. I do not really know.

b. So that is part of the school that LMF is part of, but that is someone else doing parental workshops with them?

Yes

c. Which school is this?

That is Lourier Primary in Retreat. Words Works we have actually used their games in the past so they do a similar job to us, but they work from preschool up. They have very basic games. They are very similar to us. They are not in competition with us or anything. I do not know how they got into the school, but their programme is

different in that not that many parents sign up, because you have to sign up for eight weeks. So the school obviously heard about it. We were not offering one so they just took that one

- d. If parental workshops were to happen, how often would they happen?

I think just once a year.

- e. With the children who are part of the programme and not the entire class?

No we do not even do grade R and grade one. So it is the parents of grade R and grade one. Before they get to us.

- f. So the logic is that with the Shine literacy programme you do the parental workshops with the grade R's and grade ones so that they get learning through the parents before they get to grade two and that is where LMF comes in.

Yes, but often the parents that come are the parents that probably are really looking after a child's education, but at least then they can help them. The ones that are really more involved than the other parents.

### **Organisational Support Questions**

6. Last time we talked about funding and you said you had got your own funding apart from LMF. You then said that LMF is going to have to supply you with funding as the year progresses. Do you feel that you have sufficient funding to run the literacy intervention? Do you think that there is a lack in funding in any way?

I think this year we have done it successfully and I am not sure about next year.

- a. Is next year a concern?

Yes, because we would like to do more days. We would like to do all the grade twos and all the grade threes. We only do grade two now. We do a couple of grade threes. So we would like to kind of increase the programme next year.

- i. Are you still utilizing the diagnostics test to determine which learners participate in the intervention?

Yes, it is the same programme. We at the moment at Lourier [Primary] take the grade threes. We only take them once a week. Their marks have not gone up a lot. Two reasons: One reason is that we only see them once a week and the other reason is that in grade three their brain does not absorb as much apparently, but you still want to help kids that missed it in grade two as well. So, that is at Lourier [Primary] and Westlake [Primary] we want to keep some of the kids in grade three. So ultimately we would like to take the grade threes

twice a week. So it is exactly the same, but on just like another two days of the week taking grade threes and getting different volunteers to come in. So that means obviously upping our finances.

- ii. That would then imply the reason for you wanting to do that is to make the programme more effective for those learners who have not quite closed the gap in grade two and so you feel that you still need to close that gap in grade three.

Yes, the programme is two years for children that are really struggling.

7. Was each intervention supplied with enough volunteers to ensure there was one volunteer for every two children participating in the intervention?

We sometimes do one-on-one and sometimes one-on-two. It is hard to say, because every now and then we have left children behind in class. Obviously volunteers are hard to manage. So some of them go overseas, we have had all sorts. We have had eye ops and legs broken and husbands having strokes. So it has not [happened] always every week. Generally we shuffle. If a child is absent another volunteer gets the child or the volunteer that is absent then I take a child and this one takes two. So we do not often leave some behind.

- a. So say now on a day for arguments sake there are six children and one volunteer how do you manage that situation?

That volunteer would get her two normal children. I would take maybe two and I would leave the two behind. The volunteer would obviously take her own and I would take the weaker ones and leave the stronger ones. So when ever we have options I take the weaker ones and leave the stronger ones. I have them in a list order of their weakness then I decide. I have all the registers and stuff as well.

8. How does volunteer training work? Do you train or does Shine train the volunteers?

I train so I am the initial contact with volunteers. I do an orientation training which is very short compared to what they probably need, but it is more like orientation training than actual training so it is kind of like this is what is going to happen when you are in the classroom, this is the kind of things you are going to see, this is what you are going to do in the hour. At the end you probably will not feel completely confident so the next week they go and observe for a week and then the next week they start, because it is not actually like that hectic a programme, but just because it feels like it, because there are so many things to remember. The centre manager will always be there to help them choose the game and the book and the whatever. So until they feel confident that is the process. And then Shine do in-depth training. So most people want to go on it. Some of them work on a Friday, because [it happens] on a Friday the whole morning. So they do level one, two and three in Town. So most of our volunteers do go to it. And it gives more in-depth on what we actually do.

9. What is the process of becoming a volunteer?

It depends on how you come into it. If you come through something I have done you will probably email me straight away or you would email LMF, but then they would give it to me. I will either phone, but I find it easiest to eventually to email, because there is so much details and I will say this exactly what our programme is, these are the schools we are at, these are the times so that people can first rule out of they are free at those times and if you are interested our next training is at this date. Then they will come to the next training. If they cannot I sometimes try to help them whatever day they can. Then they come to that training. So they will say which one they want to come to. They want to go to Westlake from 9am to 10am and they I will give it to Charlene and say Charlene this volunteer is coming to you can you please email them directions and get in contact with them. So she will contact them to make sure they arrive for the next week and they will watch for a week. Some will do two weeks of watching if they are a bit really stressed out. They sit with another volunteer and just observe for the lesson and the next week they can take their own child.

- a. How does the training Shine offer fit into that?

So they give us dates. They do their own volunteers as well. So we just know these dates in the year and we just tell all our volunteers that it is available. And they [Shine] do not like them doing it straight away. They want them to first do it for a while before they go into the [training].

- b. What criteria do potential volunteers have to meet before they will be considered for volunteering in the literacy intervention?

You have to be able to read. It is not very high level. You have to be able to read. You have to be able to get there and back which sometimes rules out some people. We do, do a police clearance, but we just need the slip. We do not wait for the actual clearance, because that could take forever. We just need the receipt. Ja, that is really it.

- c. Do you have templates of letters you send to volunteers?

I can just send you our sign up sheet. We have slightly different ones to the rest of LMF. LMF's questioned about who has to be Christian who does not. We have had try and narrow that down. I do not know if it has anything to do with your thing, but we had to work on. LMF had a very hectic sign on sheet. When they started you had to be Christian. Most of it was counseling which makes more sense. The actual form was very like do you believe in abortion like all these hectic things and then when people were signing up for literacy they had to say they do whatever whatever. So then we had a whole conversation on it. With the literacy programme they do not have to necessarily be Christian. Because it is a Christian organization we make sure the management is and generally often volunteers come from churches, but I made the actual sign up sheet to say these are our values during your time with the children will you say that you will stick to these values. Only for an hour a week do they have

to stick to these values. The rest of them said that it was their life values that they had to have every day. So mine is a little bit different to the rest of LMF ones.

10. Was sufficient support offered to each intervention in the training of volunteers?

n/a

11. Did each intervention receive sufficient administrative support to effectively coordinate its activities and volunteers?

Yes, except we do not have enough volunteers. Volunteers probably not, but that is not something the organization or I could fix. It just is the way it is.

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