



An Implementation Outcomes Evaluation for the NaI'ibali FUNda Leader Network: Eastern Cape Province

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Compulsory Declaration:

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The American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition style for references and citations was used in this research.

Executive Summary/Abstract

The need to improve literacy skills among the youths in South Africa has been a national priority area, with several programmes being implemented by the South African government and non-profit organisations in the country. These programmes aim to develop and improve literacy and reading skills among the youth. One such intervention is the Nal'ibali campaign. While Nal'ibali implements several interventions, this minor dissertation presents the findings of an implementation outcomes evaluation of their FUNda Leader Network. The FUNda Leader Network comprises volunteers from disadvantaged areas who implement reading clubs within their communities. The evaluator used the implementation outcomes framework developed by Proctor et al. (2011) to investigate seven implementation outcome domains of the programme, namely, acceptability, adoption, appropriateness, feasibility, fidelity, penetration, and sustainability. In line with these domains, the evaluator proposed eight evaluation questions that directed inquiry on the programme facilitators and their experiences, programme activities and service delivery, service uptake and utilisation, outcomes achieved and success stories of programme beneficiaries, as well as the sustainability of these outcomes, post the intervention.

Through assessing these domains, overall, the evaluation aimed to evaluate the extent to which Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network was implemented with fidelity and the programme's effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes. A qualitative approach utilising semi-structured interviews was employed to collect the data. A total of six interviews were conducted. Findings support the FUNda Leader Network as a relevant initiative that has facilitated the development of reading abilities and the creation of a reading culture amongst the youths in some of the disadvantaged communities in the Eastern Cape. The FUNda Leaders interviewed were satisfied with the campaign and its activities and were able to share stories about how the network and the activities enhanced knowledge and confidence among the youth in their respective reading clubs. While some interviewees discussed some community resistance, they shared the strategies adopted to raise awareness about the importance of the intervention among the parents and the community, resulting in subsequent support for the programme. This dissertation reports the findings of the implementation domains as well as the success stories of programme beneficiaries (outcomes). Additionally, recommendations to further improve the programme are discussed. Overall, the

evaluation returned positive implementation and outcomes results for Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network.

Keywords: reading clubs, youth literacy, implementation evaluation, outcomes evaluation, implementation outcomes framework

Disclaimer

This evaluation research took place during the severe Covid-19 lock down era in South Africa. Despite the pandemic, students still needed to conduct research and complete the 90-credit research dissertation within one year. During the pandemic, many services were halted, and many NGOs could not function as usual. For students, this meant that any data collection had to take place virtually, and studies had to be adapted to account for what was possible during this time. These circumstances were unavoidable, and this dissertation was produced despite these challenges outside the student's control, detailed under the research limitations in the Method Chapter.

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List of Acronyms

DoE	Department of Education
ICT	Information Communications Technology
NDP	National Development Plan
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPOs	Non-Profit Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRAESA	Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa
PIRLS	Progress in the International Reading Literacy Study
PR	Paired Reading
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SR	Shared Reading
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation reports on an implementation outcomes evaluation for the Nal’ibali campaign, specifically their FUNda Leader Network programme. The intervention aims to promote reading in South Africa. The chapter begins by introducing the Nal’ibali campaign, followed by a programme description and the programme theory of the FUNda Leader Network. Following this, the reader will be presented with a review of literacy development programmes, evaluation literature, and a plausibility assessment of the FUNda Leader Network’s underlying logic. The chapter concludes with the evaluation scope and the evaluation questions that guided the research.

The Implementing Organisation: Campaign Description

Nal’ibali (isiXhosa for “here’s the story”) was formed in 2012 as a project housed within the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) (JET, 2020). Some of its funding partners include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the DG Murray Trust (DGMT), and PRAESA (JET, 2020). Nal’ibali has also partnered with the South African government through the Department of Education (DoE) and other like-minded organisations, such as the Family Literacy Project, Lovelife, and local libraries, to support the implementation of their campaign (Nal’ibali, 2020).

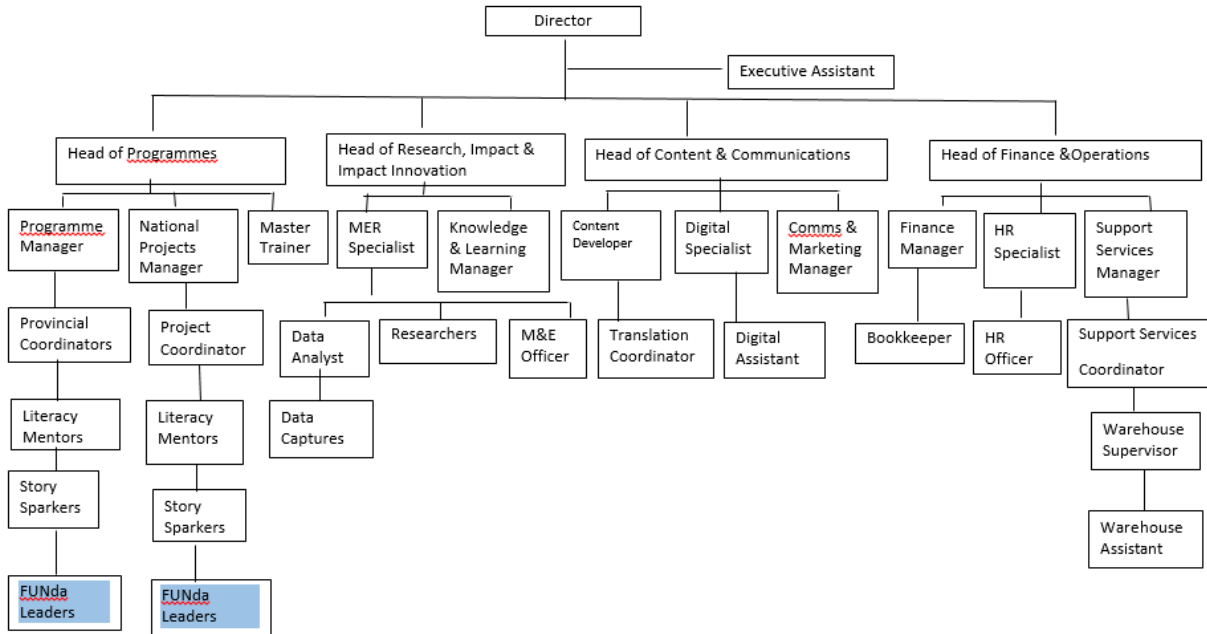
The campaign is based on the premise that early childhood is the ideal stage to impart reading skills. As a result, Nal’ibali’s interventions target children and are usually facilitated/implemented by adults passionate about reading. Since its inception, the campaign has implemented literacy training programmes, reading events, various reading and storytelling activities, and reading clubs. In addition to these programmes, Nal’ibali also distributes reading materials and supplements in English and the eleven local languages (multilingual content) to various communities around the country. Nal’ibali believes that if a child is exposed to reading materials in a familiar language, they can be motivated to learn and engage with a range of essential literacy concepts.

In June 2016, Nal’ibali introduced the FUNda Leader Network to complement its campaign efforts and involve South African communities (Nal’ibali, 2017) in their initiatives. The FUNda Leader Network is a volunteer-led initiative where adults passionate about reading, storytelling, writing, and working with children are trained to create and manage reading clubs within their communities (Nal’ibali, 2020). The recruitment of FUNda Leaders is advertised through various platforms like social media (Facebook and Twitter), the Nal’ibali website, and community literacy campaigns. To be part of the network, one must complete the three-module training, which can be conducted face-to-face or online (preference-based) (Nal’ibali, 2020). The first module is ‘An introduction to Nal’ibali’. It is a three-hour module covering the background of Nal’ibali and the importance of stories and reading for enjoyment for literacy development. The second module, ‘Be a FUNda Leader’ (one-day training), equips volunteers on how to be a FUNda Leader and explores the role that family and community members play in a child’s development (Nal’ibali, 2020). This module also trains the volunteers on how to conduct their reading sessions. The last module is called ‘Run a reading club’. During this module, Nal’ibali trains volunteer on the steps/process to set up a reading club and how to manage and sustain the reading clubs.

After completing the training, it is up to the newly trained FUNda Leader to set up their club and register it with Nal’ibali. Nal’ibali doesn’t fund FUNda Leaders to start or run these reading clubs. Instead, Nal’ibali provides the FUNda Leaders with support and mentorship post-training through Literacy Mentors and Story Sparkers (Nal’ibali, 2020). Additionally, registered clubs can request distributed materials. Figure 1 illustrates Nal’ibali’s organogram outlining how the FUNda Leaders fit into the organisation’s campaigns. FUNda Leaders are shown in the diagram as community-based volunteers working directly under the guidance of Story Sparkers.

Figure 1.

Nal'ibali's Organogram



The underlying premise of the FUNda Leader Network

The FUNda Leader Network stresses the need to create safe and conducive reading environments where reading activities can be conducted at least once a week (Nal'ibali, 2020). Some of the activities that FUNda Leaders are trained to implement include reading aloud, storytelling, playing games, singing, and providing guidance in reading and writing. These FUNda Leader reading clubs can be set up in schools, communities (churches, clinics), and libraries.

Through the reading clubs and programme activities, Nal'ibali, in collaboration with the FUNda Leaders, aims to enact change in four domains. These are:

1. **Knowledge and awareness** - cultivate adult and children's appreciation of reading for enjoyment and its benefits (JET, 2020).
2. **Opportunities to read and write** – establish and support safe and conducive environments both in and outside schools (JET, 2020).

3. **Role model** - train adults to become literacy activists, spreading the message of the importance of literacy and helping others in their formation and running of reading clubs (JET, 2020).

4. **Access to reading materials** - strengthen access to reading materials, especially in African languages and distribute bilingual supplements as hard copies via the Nal'ibali website (JET, 2020).

The FUNda Leader Network's Theory of Change (ToC) asserts that when adults who love reading and are passionate about working with children are trained, they can create safe reading and learning spaces. These reading clubs will, in turn, allow children to express themselves through reading, storytelling, or story play, which will, in turn, develop them into constant readers and writers who are creative, motivated, and equipped. This may also lead them to participate in other initiatives that could influence how they live (JET,2020; Na'ibali, 2020). Figure 2 depicts the basic logic (the change model) of the FUNda Leader Network, and Figure 3 presents the detailed ToC.

Figure 2.

The Basic Logic of Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network

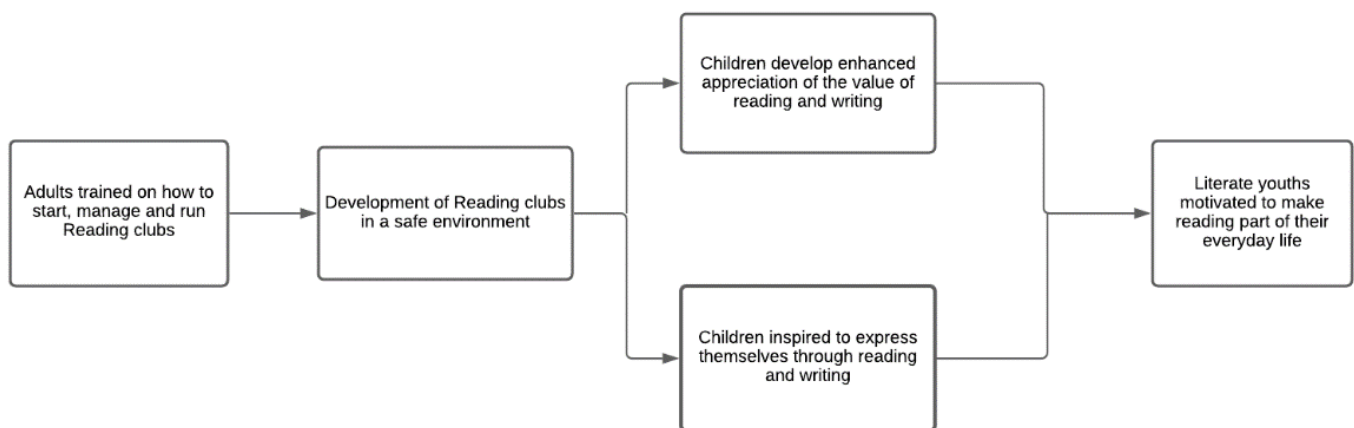
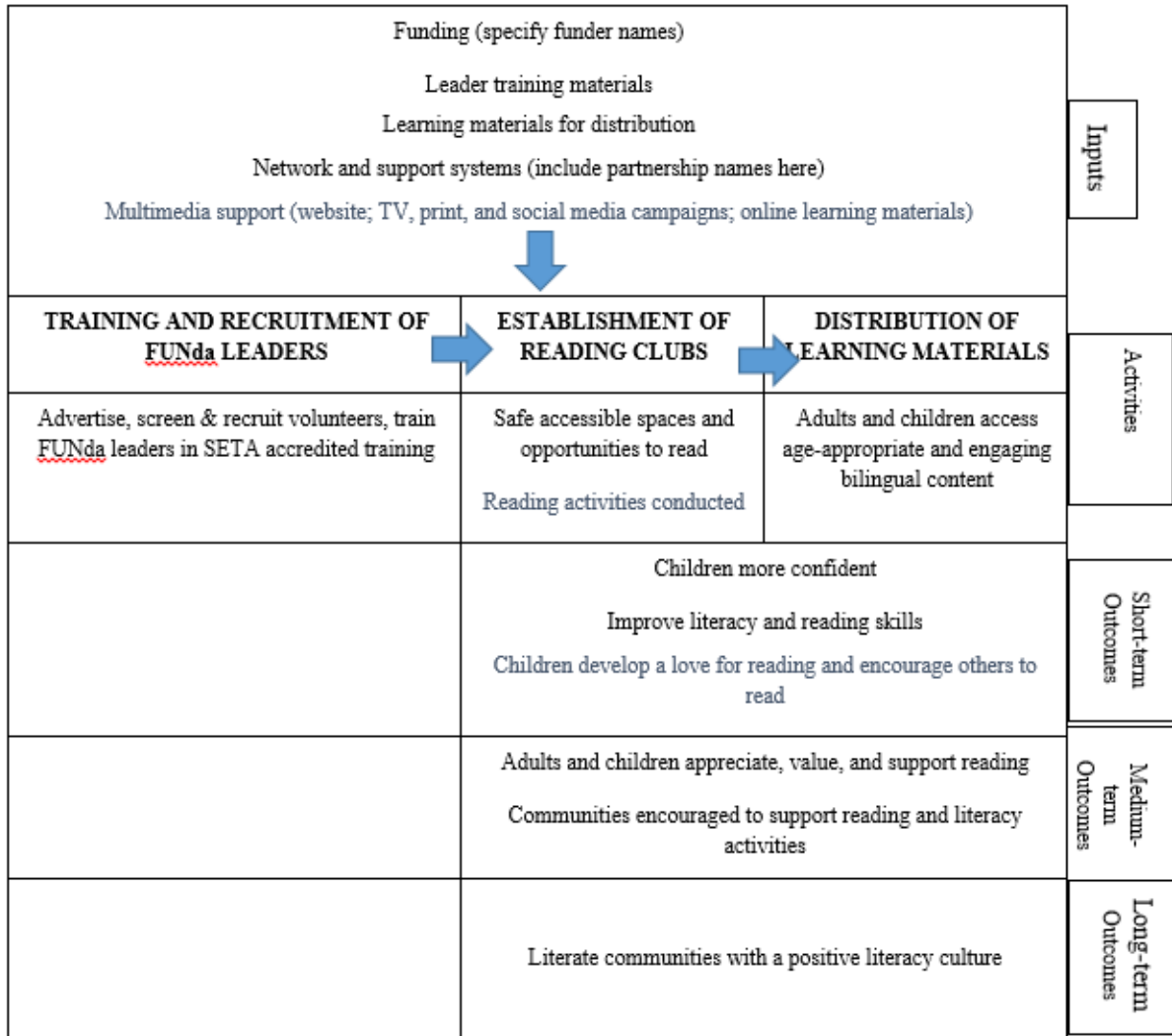


Figure 3.

Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network ToC



Literature Review

The following section presents a literature review of literacy programme design and the evaluation results of such interventions. This is followed by a plausibility assessment of Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network programme.

Context

Literacy is considered one of the essential skills for children to acquire as it provides the foundation for their future (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; see also Chizwina, 2011; OECD, 2019). Reading literacy refers to one's ability to comprehend, use, value, reflect on and engage with texts to gain knowledge, achieve personal goals, and contribute towards the communities' development (OECD, 2019). According to the National Literacy Trust (as cited in Clark & Pabion, 2016), poor literacy reduces a child's academic success. As an adult, it affects one's competitiveness in the job market. Research indicates that waiting for a child to obtain literacy skills when they begin school may already be too late and may negatively affect their academic performance (Desmond, 2012; see also Ntuli & Pretorius, 2015). Therefore, scholars have advocated for imparting reading skills early (Desmond, 2012; see also Clark et al., 2005; Clark & Pabion, 2016; Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016; Leitão et al., 2015; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2015).

The importance of literacy skills is acknowledged worldwide, evidenced by the inclusion of literacy in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Specifically, SDG 4 calls on countries to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2019). Sub-goal 4.6 aims to "ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults of both genders achieve literacy and numeracy" (UN, 2019). SDG 4.6 draws attention to literacy as an essential development tool everyone requires for better human development (UN, 2019). With basic literacy skills, people can participate in community development and realise their full potential while having better access to basic needs. Closely aligned to the SDGs, South Africa, through its National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, aims to "ensure that by 2030 South Africa should have attained quality school education, with globally competitive literacy and numeracy standards" (NPC, 2012).

In South Africa, literacy levels among the youths have been deemed a crisis (Cillers & Bloch, 2018; see also Desmond, 2012). The 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) revealed that 78% of South African Grade 4 children could not reach the lowest reading benchmark (Howie et al., 2017). The Department of Education (DoE) developed several initiatives to develop literacy (Chizwina, 2011; see also Desmond, 2012). In 2008, the DoE introduced the National Reading Strategy to promote reading in schools and communities by strengthening teachers' skills in teaching literacy, reading, and writing (DoE, 2008). Following this, between 2015 and 2019, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) launched the Read to Lead Campaign, which aimed at improving access to safe spaces and reading materials by increasing the number of libraries and reading materials (DBE, 2016).

Despite the DoE's efforts, recommendations from the 2016 PIRLS assessment highlighted the need for shared responsibility towards literacy development (Howie et al., 2017). Howie et al. (2017) suggested an inclusive approach towards improving literacy through the enriched participation of all stakeholders comprising the government, Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs), schoolteachers, parents, learners, and the broader community. Based on these insights, several NPOs have developed campaigns to supplement government efforts to improve literacy in South Africa. Nal'ibali is one such campaign.

Key Literacy Activities

Some key activities in literacy programmes include training literacy tutors, forming reading clubs, partnerships with libraries, and distributing reading materials in libraries, schools, and homes. Programmes usually recruit and train parents, volunteers, librarians, and teachers who are willing and passionate to act as reading enablers in communities, to stimulate and nurture a culture of reading (Hanemann, 2015; see also Ama Baafrá Abeberese et al., 2011; Desmond, 2012; Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; Villiger et al., 2019). These individuals are referred to as reading tutors or mentors. Their reading activities are designed around two predominant approaches: Paired reading and shared reading (Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016; see also Hanemann, 2015).

The paired reading approach involves one-on-one tutoring sessions for struggling readers between the tutor and the tutee (Villiger et al., 2019). A vital element of the paired reading design is that it gives the child the responsibility to choose reading material. To ensure that the tutors understand the design, they are trained in different activities that can be adapted to develop skills for struggling readers (Miller et al., 2011; see also Villiger et al., 2019). This approach has been chiefly used for early literacy development. The role of the tutor includes assisting the tutee through reading difficult words aloud together, repeated reading, supported by discussions, as well as questioning and searching for meanings of new words to ensure that the child understands and can read the text (Villiger et al., 2019; see also Miller et al., 2011).

Shared reading, according to Parkes (2000, p.1), “involves a teacher and a large group of children sitting closely together to read”. The approach is interactive, allowing participants to relate with fellow learners during reading sessions. The teacher uses strategies like reading aloud, dramatic storytelling, the story plays, and other fun-filled activities like puzzles and games. While initiatives usually use a paired reading or a shared reading approach, it is essential to note that in some instances, programmes combine both paired reading and shared reading for within and out-of-school components. Conclusively, the underlying rationale of both designs is to develop one’s literacy skills through various reading and writing activities.

Evaluations of literacy programmes

Table 1 presents a summary of different reading programmes implemented in developed and developing countries between 2000 and 2019. All the programmes in the table have been evaluated to assess their effectiveness. The table presents the approach used by each programme (paired reading and shared reading), the main programme activities as well as the critical evaluation findings.

Table 1.*Summary of Literacy Development Programmes*

Country	Programme Name	Target Population	Design	Key Programme Activities	Evaluation Finding
Northern Ireland UK	Time to Read	8 to 9 years	PR ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer training • One-on-one reading activities • Workplace visit (mentee to mentor's workplace) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence and reading enjoyment • Boosted future aspirations • Improved reading comprehension
Switzerland	Tandem Reading (<i>Lesen im Tandem</i>).	Grade 3	PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutor training • One-on-one reading activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better reading fluency • Increased confidence and reading enjoyment
Rwanda	Literacy Boost – Life-wide learning approach (LB)	Primary aged pupils	SR ² & PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher training • Educating communities • Development and distribution of age-appropriate reading materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved reading skills • Strengthened community participation in literacy-related activities • Strengthening of the book chain • Enhanced access to reading materials
	Literacy Boost – Teacher Training (TT)	Primary aged pupils	SR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher training • Within school reading activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved the pedagogy of teaching reading • Creation culture of reading in classrooms • Establishment of classrooms with a rich print environment • Reduced primary school repetition
	Literacy, Language, and Learning Initiative (L3)	Primary aged pupils	SR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of teachers • Provision of age-appropriate storybooks in the local language • Community engagement through volunteer reading clubs, materials, competitions, and other reading activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved reading and writing proficiency and critical thinking. • Improved academic performance • Increased confidence and reading enjoyment

Notes ¹ PR refers to Paired Reading

² SR refers to Shared Reading

Table 1. Continued

Summary of Literacy Development Programmes

Country	Programme Name	Target Population	Design	Key Programme Activities	Evaluation Finding
Philippines	Read Philippines (<i>Basa Pilipinas</i>)	Primary aged pupils	SR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher training and distribution of training guides for literacy instruction Provision of age-appropriate reading materials in English and local languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved reading skills Enhanced interaction between mother language and English as a language of instruction
	<i>Sa Aklat Sisikat</i> program (SAS)	Primary-aged pupils, 4 th grade only	SR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher training Provision of age-appropriate reading materials in English and local languages. Recording books read in a chart and jotting notes in a notebook. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased reading enjoyment Improved reading skills Improved academic performance Enhanced interaction between mother language and English as a language of instruction
Senegal	Harnessing Youth Volunteers as Literacy Leaders (HYVALL) YMCA of Senegal	Youths	SR & PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentoring struggling readers Home visits to promote family participation in literacy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved reading and writing skills Elimination of zero scores at school.
Australia	The Hairytails of Heroboy programme (Better Beginnings project)	Primary aged pupils	SR & PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of reading guides to teachers Distribution of resource folder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding of the importance of reading for pleasure Enhanced children's confidence and literacy skills, as well as reading habits Increased library visits and borrowing of books Enhanced parental participation
USA	The Learn United Project	Primary aged pupils	SR & PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers training Group and one-on-one reading sessions Reading aloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved reading skills Improved academic performance
England	Early Words Together	Primary aged pupils	SR & PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer training Supporting parents in improving the home learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved parent participation and confidence in supporting their children's reading skills development Positive change in the home reading environment Increased library visits and borrowing of books Enhanced child's interest in reading stories and books Concentration levels, confidence, and interaction between parents and their children improve.

Table 1. Continued

Summary of Literacy Development Programmes

Country	Programme Name	Target Population	Design	Key Programme Activities	Evaluation Finding
South Africa	Biblionef	Primary aged pupils	SR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of teachers • Provision of age-appropriate reading materials • Group reading activities (reading clubs, writing of stories, reading competitions, and debates) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved print environment • Increased motivation and interest in reading for pleasure • An improved narration of stories and events • Enhanced understanding of the value of reading.
	Family Literacy	2-7years	SR&PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote storybook reading in Zulu • Training of caregivers • Training of parents • Reading activities (reading aloud, paired reading, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence and memory • Improved reading and storytelling skills • Improved book behaviour • Improved discourse
	Kha Ri Gude	Adult (15+) Literacy Programme 2008	SR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of volunteer tutors • Distribution of reading materials • Shared reading activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved reading skills • Enhanced self-reliance

Summary of Evaluation Findings

Literacy is a complex concept with different elements, including reading comprehension, fluency, writing, and vocabulary (Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016). It is important to note that evaluators may choose to evaluate the effect on all or a few of these elements. Table 1 shows that all the programmes contributed towards a positive reading and writing culture. In Northern Ireland and Switzerland, the paired reading approach contributed towards improved reading comprehension and fluency, respectively (Miller et al., 2011; Villiger et al., 2019). Programmes that included teacher training improved the pedagogy of teaching reading, which is crucial to develop children's reading from an early age (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; see also Desmond, 2012; Friedlander et al., 2016; Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019; Leitão et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2011; Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011; Nicolas et al., 2020; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; Villiger et al., 2019). The use of multilingual reading materials in some of the programmes enabled better interaction between local languages and English as a language of instruction (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; see also Ama Baafrá Abeberese et al., 2011; Desmond, 2012; Friedlander et al., 2016; Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005).

Similarly, interventions implemented at the community level did not only improve the participation of parents in their child's literacy development. But then also resulted in the creation of opportunities for pupils to play and practice literacy activities in a conducive reading environment outside of school as well as interactions between parents and their children (Friedlander et al., 2016; see also Ama Baafrá Abeberese et al., 2011; Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; Desmond, 2012; Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019; Lieta et al., 2015; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; Villiger et al., 2019). The evaluations also concluded that improved literacy skills enabled better academic performance. For instance, in Senegal, the programme instigated a substantial drop of zero scores (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017).

Friedlander and Goldenberg's (2016) improved book ecosystem supported an increase in the frequency and number of books read. Through improved reading, children's memory and storytelling skills developed, as they could recall stories they read (Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005). In the Khai Ri Gude programme, which targeted adults that struggled with reading (who had little or no formal education), reading skills were improved, and this enabled better self-reliance and

standard of living for those that completed the programme activities (Desmond, 2012; see also Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019).

Overall, the programmes reviewed were effective, and evaluators were able to identify several factors that contributed to the programmes' success. These factors are discussed in the next section.

Factors contributing to the success of programmes

Evidence from the literacy development programmes, presented in Table 1, revealed that the availability of reading materials, the training of tutors, and partnerships were the three most significant factors that contributed to the positive effects noted.

Availability of resources

Evaluators found that enhancing access to and the availability of reading materials contributed towards an increase in reading for pleasure (Ama Baafrá Abeberese et al., 2011; see also Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; Desmond, 2012; Friedlander et al., 2016; Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019; Leitão et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2011; Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011; Nicolas et al., 2020; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; Villiger et al., 2019). Furthermore, the availing of reading materials that were age-appropriate, relevant to the target population, and in a familiar language(s) was found to improve reading comprehension (Ama Baafrá Abeberese et al., see also 2011; Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; Desmond, 2012; Friedlander et al., 2016; Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019; Leitão et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2011; Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011; Nicolas et al., 2020; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; Villiger et al., 2019). To ensure the sustainability of the book ecosystem, the Literacy Boost programme in Rwanda went a step further and assisted local writers, editors, and illustrators with ways to improve production (Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016).

Unfortunately, the mere availability of books does not necessarily translate to use. Nassimbeni and Desmond (2011) found that in some schools, donated books were either packed away or on display, and children were not allowed to use them. In the Literacy Boost, Hairytales of Heroboy, and SAS programmes, however, the presence of a read-a-thon concept (recording of the number of books read over a stipulated time on a notebook or chart) facilitated a surge in the

number of books read (Ama Baafrā Abeberese et al., 2011; Friedlander et al., 2016; Leitāo et al., 2015).

Tutor training

Previously literacy programmes focused on a child's reading development without teaching reading skills to the tutors (Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016). The training of tutors, however, enables the ultimate implementation of literacy activities (Nicolas et al., 2020). In concurrence, Miller et al. (2011) stated that findings from the first phase of the Time to Read programme were insignificant due to the use of untrained tutors. This resulted in poor implementation fidelity. The training of tutors not only increases the likelihood of success but enables these individuals to create and manage literacy-friendly reading activities and spaces (Miller et al., 2011; see also Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016; Nicolas et al., 2020).

Partnerships

A common theme identified by the evaluators was that nurturing literacy skills should not be one party's responsibility but a comprehensive one, shared and inclusive of all stakeholders. Partnerships between implementing organisations, the government, teachers, librarians, and communities are central to realising significant and sustainable results (Friedlander et al., 2016; see also Haneman, 2015). It is through partnerships that stakeholders can develop ways to work together effectively to safeguard the sustainability of programme activities and gains even after programme closure (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; see also Ama Baafrā Abeberese et al., 2011; Desmond, 2012; Friedlander et al., 2016; Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019; Leitāo et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2011; Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011; Nicolas et al., 2020; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; Villiger et al., 2019). Klieve and Fluckiger (2015) further posit that parents or guardians are regarded as the best teachers and assessors of their children, mainly because they better appreciate their child's behaviour, strengths, weaknesses, and reading trends. Partnering with the local community in Northern Ireland boosted pupils' future aspirations. Participating mentors were encouraged to invite mentees to their workplace as a motivational driver towards participation and improvement in reading skills (Miller et al., 2011).

In Rwanda and the Philippines, through the USAID-funded programmes, partnerships with the responsible ministry facilitated the extension of programme activities to other schools outside the programme's scope (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017). Thus, the inclusion of the government facilitated policy formulation and changes in the pedagogy of teaching reading (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017: see also Cillers and Bloch, 2018; Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016; Leitão et al., 2015).

Recommendations from these evaluations have depicted the need for the continued existence of appropriate corresponding literacy support that ensures constant literacy development for struggling readers across all age groups.

Plausibility of Programme Theory

A plausibility assessment was conducted for the ToC of Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network programme to assess whether the programme's design and intended outcomes align with best practice literature on literacy development. The findings from the plausibility assessment are presented below.

The effectiveness of using volunteers as literacy facilitators

The concept of using or recruiting volunteers in literacy development programmes has been noted as essential in literacy development programmes. As discussed in the introduction, Nal'ibali uses volunteers for the FUNda Leader Network programme. The main reason is that using volunteers establishes relevance in communities by using passionate individuals about kids and reading (Friedlander et al., 2016). A report on literacy programmes by Haneman in 2015 discovered that programmes that recruited volunteers within communities were greatly welcomed and effective owing to volunteers' social commitment or willingness of individuals to save struggling readers. Volunteers proved effective in the Tandem reading programme in Switzerland as it created a non-formal environment where kids could freely express themselves (Villiger et al., 2019).

Evidence from literacy programmes that used volunteers suggests that working with willing communities is a method to effectively create reading habits in communities (Friedlander et al., 2016). This is because, through community volunteer, evidence gained remains within a

community hence creating reading communities (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; see also Friedlander et al., 2016). This is supported by evidence from the Literacy Boost programme in Rwanda, which revealed that using volunteers is effective in ensuring the sustainability of programme outcomes. Thus, for Nal'ibali, using volunteers from the community with a passion for reading and working with children can be assumed to be a good design decision that can increase the likelihood of achieving their intended outcomes as outlined in the programme theory.

Effectiveness of training literacy facilitators.

While research has noted the importance of using people passionate about reading in literacy programmes, another critical component is training these volunteers. The training of literacy tutors aims to improve their reading pedagogy (Hanemann & McKay, 2019; see also Christina & Vinogradova, 2017). Thus it allows the literacy activists to learn skills on the critical elements of how to effectively teach reading (Hanemann & McKay, 2019; see also Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016; Miller et al., 2011). Nal'ibali trains the FUNda Leaders following their recruitment into the programme.

Training of literacy tutors also helps ensure tutors are aware of how to create reading clubs, how to conduct reading activities, the language of instruction, and how to select suitable reading materials (Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016; see also Hanemann, 2015). Some of the areas covered in the training of teachers and community volunteers in the Literacy Boost programme included the introduction to reading development and instruction for young children, practical use and management of story books in classrooms and reading clubs, and addressing second language issues (Friedlander et al., 2016).

Christina and Vinogradova (2017) noted that training tutors in Senegal helped identify reading tutors' needs, allowing the trainers to include them in their training content. The result of this inclusion was better implementation fidelity, which ultimately helped by improving literacy skills. It is also important to note that the training of qualified teaching personnel on literacy development led to a change in how classrooms were presented (Friedlander et al., 2016; see also Nassimbine & Desmond, 2011). In their study, Nassimbine and Desmond (2011) noted a change in classrooms' print environment because teachers have increased charts on classroom walls and

small libraries where children could quickly grab a book during their free time. Nal'ibali's theory of change includes training volunteers covering the most critical aspects like teaching, creating and running reading clubs and imparting knowledge on how to conduct the different activities effectively. In this context, it can be assumed that through volunteers' training, Nal'ibali has established the necessary foundations to achieve the intended outcomes.

Establishment and running of reading clubs.

Reading clubs have been referred to as the bases of the shared reading component. Through shared reading, literacy tutors conduct reading activities with more than one participant. Reading clubs aim to create safe spaces where kids can meet in groups and conduct literacy-related activities freely (Nicolas et al., 2020; see also Hanemann, 2015). A key finding from evaluations is that in reading clubs, several activities include reading stories aloud, playing games involving letters, storytelling, and singing (Ama Baafrā Abeberese et al., 2011; see also Nassimbine & Desmond, 2011). These activities match the intentions of the FUNda Leader's reading clubs. Reading clubs create opportunities for children to develop while playing (Ama Baafrā Abeberese et al., 2011). Also, the use of reading clubs in literacy programmes has significantly been associated with boosting confidence, as those once shy reading club members rely on peer support (Friedlander et al., 2016; see also Ama Baafrā Abeberese et al., 2011; Nassimbine & Desmond, 2011). Thus, using reading clubs makes reading more enjoyable in a non-formal environment (Ama Baafrā Abeberese et al., 2011). For Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network, a key element to the ToC is the establishment and running of reading clubs. Therefore, based on the evidence from the evaluation findings presented, the Nal'ibali ToC is plausible in this regard.

Distribution of bilingual reading materials

Research has shown that to ensure success in literacy programmes, the distribution of reading materials is necessary. This is a crucial activity of Nal'ibali. Poor literacy skills in communities are considerably associated with poor access to reading materials (Friedlander et al., 2016; see Nassimbene & Desmond, 2011). Hence, the need to complement other programming activities by distributing reading materials (Nassimbene & Desmond, 2011). Several studies have revealed that there are also positive links between the number of books available and the frequency

of reading (Friedlander et al., 2016; see also Ama Baafrā Abeberese et al., 2011; Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; Desmond, 2012; Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019; Lieta et al., 2015; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; Villiger et al., 2019). In the Senegal, Rwanda, and Australian literacy programmes (outlined in Table 1), the increase in reading materials resulted in the creation of a reading culture where communities were now reading for pleasure (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; Friedlander et al., 2016; Lieta et al., 2015). Nal'ibali's inclusion of the distribution of reading materials is supported by this research and further enhances the design elements of the programme. Overall, this component enhances the feasibility of the ToC/the programme's underlying logic.

Another critical concept in the distribution of reading material is the distribution and use of multilingual reading materials. While it is vital to distribute reading materials, it is also essential to distribute reading materials that attract the target population (Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011). The argument is that the choice of language to be used during reading activities can hinder the success of literacy programmes (Haneman & Mckay, 2019). Thus, the need to use reading materials in a more familiar language caters to the needs of different ethnic and linguistic groups (Hanemann, 2015). As discussed above, Nal'ibali has reading materials in 12 languages. The research validates that learning in one's mother language enables learners to build on their knowledge (Haneman & Mckay 2019; see also Ama Baafrā Abeberese et al., 2011). The assumption is that once the mother language has been firmly established, it is easy for the other languages to be added (Bloch, 2006, as cited in Nassimbeni and Desmond, 2011). The literature review's evidence supports the distribution of multilingual reading materials in Nal'ibali's ToC.

As evidenced above, Nal'ibali's design and activities are supported by other similar literacy programmes that have been effective. It has therefore been determined that the FUNda Leader Network's ToC is plausible.

Evaluation Focus.

A preliminary interview with the Nal'ibali's programme staff revealed that every year since the network's inception, Nal'ibali randomly selects FUNda Leaders to participate in an annual survey. The survey aims to obtain information about the FUNda Leaders' network, assessing how

well their reading clubs perform and their various activities. The survey includes implementation questions like which activities they have done, how many books they have access to, access and use of the Nal'ibali reading supplements, and factors limiting them from being more active FUNda Leaders. However, the survey only captures quantitative data, and as a result, Nal'ibali hasn't been able to capture in-depth information about the implementation and outcomes of the Network. In other words, the extent to which the FUNda Leaders perceive the campaign's performance to be working, for whom, and why. Additionally, Nal'ibali didn't have success stories documented about the changes FUNda Leaders observed in the communities they serviced.

Given the above, consultations with Nal'ibali resulted in a decision to conduct an implementation and outcomes evaluation. The research goal was to assist them in capturing in-depth information (rich qualitative data) to explain their annual survey results (quantitative scores).

To decide on the evaluation questions of the research, the evaluator investigated what frameworks existed in the literature. Proctor et al. (2011) advanced the implementation science literature by developing their implementation outcomes framework. Implementation outcomes are “the effects of deliberate and purposive actions to implement new treatment practices and services” (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 65). The framework is essentially a taxonomy of eight distinct implementation outcomes: acceptability, adoption, appropriateness, feasibility, fidelity, implementation cost, penetration, and sustainability. A definition of each implementation outcome measure has been included in Table 2. For this research, however, the evaluator excluded the cost measure because Nal'ibali had previously conducted a cost-efficiency evaluation, and they weren't interested in any new costing data.

Given that Nal'ibali wanted to include the Network's success as part of the research, the evaluator decided to add a service outcome measure to the seven implementation outcome areas. Thus, service effectiveness was included in this research's framework. This short-term outcome measure aimed to investigate the efficacy of the FUNda Leader Network in improving literacy. Table 3 describes service effectiveness and the adjusted description for the Nal'ibali context.

Evaluation Questions

For each of the seven implementation outcome areas (Table 2) and the short-term outcome area (Table 3), the evaluator then developed an associated/aligned evaluation question. Thus, the following evaluation questions guided the research:

1. To what extent are the FUNda Leaders satisfied with the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?
2. How is the intervention uptake?
3. To what extent do the FUNda Leaders think or feel the campaign is relevant? Using which medium or setting?
4. To what extent are the recruited reading club members (activity beneficiaries) returning for the service?
5. Are the programme activities being carried out with consistency as prescribed and planned?
6. To what extent is the programme reaching its target per annum? What have been the reasons for over/under coverage?
7. How sustainable is the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?
8. How and in what ways has the FUNda Leader Network and its activities changed people? What success stories have been observed?

Table 2.*Implementation Outcome Measures, Definitions, and Evaluation Questions*

Outcome Measure	Definition (direct quotes)	Definition as applied to the Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network	Evaluation questions
Acceptability	The extent to which implementation stakeholders perceive a treatment, service, practice, or innovation to be agreeable, palatable, or satisfactory (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 67).	FUNda Leaders' perception and or satisfaction with the intervention components and implementation strategies	To what extent are the FUNda Leaders satisfied with the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?
Adoption	The intention, initial decision, or action to try or employ an innovation or evidence-based practice. Adoption may also be called "uptake" (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 97).	The intention and uptake of the FUNda Leader Network and its services	How is the intervention uptake?
Appropriateness	Perceived fit, relevance, or compatibility of the innovation or evidence-based practice for a given practice setting, provider, or consumer; and perceived fit of the innovation or evidence-based approach to address a particular issue or problem (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 69).	The extent to which the FUNda Leaders think the FUNda Leader Network component of the campaign is relevant for addressing children's or the community's literacy needs.	To what extent do the FUNda Leaders think or feel the campaign is relevant? Using which medium or setting?
Feasibility	The extent to which an innovation or practice can be successfully used or carried out within a given agency or setting (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 69).	The extent to which the implementation of the FUNda Leader Network and its activity is considered achievable for the intended case.	To what extent are the recruited reading club members (activity beneficiaries) returning for the service?

Table 2. Continued

Implementation Outcome Measures, Definitions, and Linked Evaluation Questions

Outcome Measure	Definition (direct quotes)	Definition as applied to the FUNda Leader Network	Evaluation questions
Fidelity	The degree to which an intervention or implementation strategy was delivered as prescribed in the original protocol or as intended by program developers. It may include multiple dimensions such as content, process, exposure, and dosage (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 69).	The degree to which the FUNda Leader Network activities are conducted or implemented as prescribed.	Are the programme activities being carried out with consistency as prescribed and planned?
Penetration	The extent to which an innovation or practice is integrated within a service setting and its subsystems (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 70).	What is the extent to which the FUNda Leader Network and its activities are reaching the intended beneficiaries?	To what extent is the programme reaching its target per annum? What have been the reasons for over/under coverage?
Sustainability	The extent to which a recently implemented practice is maintained and institutionalized within a service setting's ongoing, stable operations (Proctor et al., 2011, p. 70).	The extent to which the FUNda Leader Network and its activities can be maintained or be part of the community's daily life.	How sustainable is the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?

Table 3.

Service Outcome Measure, Definition, and Evaluation Question

Outcome Measure	Definition (direct quotes)	Definition as applied to the FUNda Leader Network	Evaluation questions
Effectiveness	The extent to which intervention activities are meeting the intended results. (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016).	The extent to which the FUNda Leader Network and its activities are improving reading and or literacy.	How and in what ways has the FUNda Leader Network and its activities changed people? What success stories have been observed?

Chapter Two: Method

This chapter presents the method used to answer the implementation outcome evaluation questions raised in the previous chapter.

Design

The evaluation used an explorative, descriptive research design. An exploratory design involves examining a topic to fill a knowledge gap and generating detailed information and emerging insights (Leavy, 2017). The descriptive design consists of comprehending what and how it transpired (Patton, 2015). According to Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) and Leavy (2017), descriptive and exploratory studies rely significantly on qualitative information. Hence, the evaluation adopted a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), enables the description of a phenomenon comprehensively. That is, it seeks to capture people's meanings, perceptions, and experiences. In this regard, an exploratory, descriptive design with a qualitative approach was selected as the most suited design for assessing the implementation outcomes.

Data providers and sample

Data providers consisted of FUNda Leaders with registered reading clubs. These were selected from the 2018 and 2019 reading club registration databases. The reason for choosing these specific years was because they were the most recent to be registered and took part in Nal'ibali's recent annual survey. The assumption was that this evaluation's findings would help provide in-depth information to explain the 2018 and 2019 yearly survey feedback.

The evaluator used purposive sampling, which involves carefully or strategically selecting participants who can answer the evaluation questions in-depth (Patton, 2015; see also Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). This was appropriate due to the deliberate selection of 2018 and 2019 FUNda Leaders whose experiences would enable gathering implementation outcomes data linked to the survey results. FUNda Leaders were randomly selected from Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader database (45 leaders with cell numbers).

After working through the list of FUNda Network Leaders and randomly selecting leaders to contact to inquire if they would participate in the research, the evaluator ran into a problem. The database was not up-to-date; thus, cellphone numbers were no longer operational, or a new individual had the number listed on the database. There were no further details for these individuals and no way of obtaining their information. In other instances, some of these leaders were no longer running reading clubs due to the pandemic, and others declined to participate in the research. Working through the database, 11 FUNda Leaders accepted the invitation to be part of the research. Table 4 details the number of participants invited to participate in an interview.

Table 4.

Sampled Participants by Province

Province	Reached participants
Eastern Cape	6
Free State	1
Gauteng	2
Kwazulu Natal	2
Limpopo	0
Mpumalanga	0
Northern Cape	0
North West	0
Western Cape	0
Total	11

As shown in Table 4, most of the FUNda Leaders interviewed resided in the Eastern Cape. This skewed the research results only to be aligned to the experiences of FUNda Leaders in this province. As such, a decision was made to limit the research to the Eastern Cape FUNda Leader Network; thus, the final sample only consisted of six participants.

Data collection method

The evaluation study used semi-structured conversations with one respondent at a time. They involved a blend of closed and open-ended questions. Semi-structured interviews are advantageous because they give room for follow-up question(s) or probing, that is, the why and how questions (Adams, 2015; see also Creswell & Poth, 2018). The use of interviews facilitated in-depth capturing of the extent to which the FUNda Leaders perceived the implementation of the campaign to be working, for whom, and why, as well as the service outcomes of the network. Due

to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted virtually using Skype calls. All interviews were conducted in English, recorded and transcribed by the evaluator. A copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

Procedure and ethical considerations

Nal'ibali, through their Head of Research and Development, granted permission for the evaluation and for the evaluator to access secondary data (i.e., the programme's database). The evaluation commenced once the evaluator's research proposal was granted ethical approval by the Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee (see ethical clearance letter in Appendix B).

FUNda Leaders were informed that participating in the evaluation was voluntary and there were no known risks associated with their participation. Before each interview, a consent form was read to the participant (see Appendix C), informing them that they were free to withdraw from the interview at any time and that no incentives were offered for their participation. Informed consent was given by the participants verbally before the interview commenced. The participants were also assured that their participation and responses would be treated with confidentiality. To ensure the anonymity of participants, no names (neither of them nor their reading club names) were used. Once the data was collected, each interviewee was referred to by a participant number.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. According to Bazeley and Jackson (2013), the software does not analyse the data. Instead, it provides a set of tools that assist a researcher in conducting the analysis. The software helps to ensure rigour in the data analysis process (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). In this evaluation, NVivo helped the evaluator organise the data to identify emerging themes quickly. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the interview transcripts. The thematic analysis consists of identifying, categorising, and reflecting on significant common emerging themes in the data (Goodrick & Rodgers, 2015; see also Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To analyse the data, the evaluator applied Braun and Clarke's (2006)'s six phases guide to thematic data analysis. These include familiarising the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing, defining, and producing the report. The first phase, familiarisation of the data,

involved reading and re-reading transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This stage helped the evaluator recollect and gain an overview of the data and gave the evaluator some initial analytic thoughts. The second phase, generating initial codes, involved reading transcripts and capturing initial codes. Coding involved the identification of features of the data that appeared to be exciting and valuable to the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase three, searching for themes, involved the identification of themes that emerged from the codes. A theme, according to Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p.3356), “is a pattern that captures something significant about the data or the research question”. Phase four, reviewing themes, involved reviewing themes identified during Phase three to understand whether they captured all the codes without repetition and not leaving out any critical themes. This phase also included the identification of all the information that supported each of the identified themes.

Phase five, defining themes, involved the final refinement of the themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase is vital as it aims to ascertain what each theme entails and how they relate to other themes. This phase aims to “identify the essence of each theme's theme” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92). The evaluator ended with phase six, producing the report, which involved the presentation of the evaluation results in this study.

Methodological limitations

The most significant limitation of this implementation outcomes evaluation was that the researcher could not adhere to the original plan to interview and report findings from all nine provinces. While eleven interviews were initially conducted, as detailed above, only six were included in the final report. Data collection and access to participants were restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial plan was to have beneficiaries of the reading clubs, their families and teachers, but because of COVID, the evaluator could not conduct these additional interviews. Thus, the data collection was limited to only the FUNda Leaders' perceptions; unfortunately, there was no way to work around this.

In addition, since FUNda Leaders are volunteers, their participation in the research was voluntary, and in most instances, participants were unwilling to participate. A challenge that Nal’ibali also shared as facing during their annual surveys.

An additional challenge was that Nal'ibali (via the survey responses) collected the cell phone numbers of the FUNda Leaders. Still, in several cases, these numbers were no longer operating, and no updated contact details were recorded, resulting in an inability to contact these FUNda Leaders.

Out of the eleven interviews conducted, the majority (six) were from the Eastern Cape Province. Given the poor representation by the other provinces and because one of the interviewees was not conversant in English, the researcher chose to analyse and present responses from the Eastern Cape FUNda Leaders only. Thus, the findings are not generalisable to all provinces.

Despite the research being confined to one province, it is essential to note that the evaluation finding still allows insight into the implementation and outcomes of some of the reading clubs, which can be further explored in future research.

Finally, because the evaluator could not identify nor have access to any teachers and beneficiaries, and based on the travel restrictions at the time of the research, the client report (this dissertation) is based on self-report data of the FUNda Leaders' views and perceptions. Thus, accuracy is constrained, and triangulation was impossible with other data sources/providers.

Chapter Three: Results

This chapter outlines the results of the research. The results are reported and presented by the evaluation questions.

Evaluation Question 1

To what extent are the FUNda Leaders satisfied with the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?

FUNda Leaders were asked whether they enjoyed being part of the FUNda Leader Network and their sentiments towards the reading club(s) they had created. All six FUNda Leaders interviewed indicated they were happy to be part of the network because they were passionate about reading; working with children for personal development, and helping children develop their reading and writing skills. To support these assertions, the quotations below illustrate what FUNda Leaders said.

“I am very much happy with my reading club, and most of my learners were able to read and write.”

(Participant 1)

“Yes, I am happy with the reading club that I created mainly because of the enthusiasm that I have to help the children to discover that they can. They can amount to something they can do, something worthwhile, you know, and the pride they can take afterwards.”

(Participant 2)

“Yes, I am happy with the reading club I created, I love reading, and that’s why I joined the Nali’ibali campaign so that I can also help children to grow loving and enjoying reading. Seeing children developing a love to read books.”

(Participant 4)

“A lot, a lot. I enjoy it, my sister, because I enjoy being with kids and helping them.”

(Participant 6)

In addition, four interviewees reported that they were happy being part of the FUNda Leader Network based on the training they received in teaching reading. Although three of them were already working in teaching, they relayed that the Nal’ibali training equipped them with

additional knowledge and skills in teaching reading, including how to administer different activities to promote a reading culture among the youth. The following quotations support this.

“Being part of Nal’ibali, I have managed to help with knowledge on how to teach kids how to read and write.”

(Participant 3)

“Yes, I enjoy being part of the campaign because they guided me in teaching reading.”

(Participant 4)

“I enjoy it, to be part of iFunda, after the Nal’ibali training. I then started my reading club, and I really enjoy being part of iFunda because the training really made the reading activities easy. I was taught a lot about children and how to work with them, all age groups..”

(Participant 5)

Evaluation Question 2

How was the intervention’s uptake?

All participants revealed that they were happy with the love and support they were getting from their communities. While all participants indicated this, some expressed that they faced community resistance in some instances, which initially slowed the intervention uptake. Responses to this question were grouped into three subsections; perceived positive response from beneficiaries, perceived positive response from the community, and community resistance. These results are elaborated further under each subsection in the succeeding paragraphs.

Perceived positive response from the community

Interviewees revealed that the reading clubs and associated activities were welcomed by some community members, most probably because of the support these clubs were giving to the youth. Interviewees mentioned that the reading clubs were welcomed because they reduced children’s unproductive time. It also helped create a non-formal environment where kids can play while improving their reading abilities. The following responses illustrate this:

“...some parents, they are so happy for their children. Instead of doing things in the streets, they are getting an education.”

(Participant 5)

“The parents at home commended the program because they saw an improvement in their children’s reading. At school, fellow workers have also commended the changes that have been brought through the reading club, and some have joined. Initially, I was the only one who had joined, but one fellow worker later joined after noticing the change in children’s reading ability.”

(Participant 2)

Two interviewees further outlined that in a show of their support, parents encouraged their children to attend the reading sessions, as some had no time to help kids with their homework. One interviewee stated because of the changes that were being noted in children’s reading activities. Some parents started encouraging children to attend the reading sessions. This is illustrated by the reactions below:

“The community was very happy because, after school, I would ask their kids to come to my place so that I can help them to read and do their homework. So I helped as kids were no longer going far away from home to play. It also in a way, helped their kids to do something productive after school.”

(Participant 3)

“I am doing the activities at home. The community loved the initiative and started to encourage their children to attend the sessions.”

(Participant 4)

In instances where the reading clubs were school-based [conducted during school lessons], there was limited community participation. As such, the FUNda Leaders could not comment on the community's reaction. However, they commented that the teachers, who form part of the community, were happy with the initiative. The remarks below illustrate this.

“I think they love the idea because children are enjoying reading, and their skills improve through the reading sessions. We are not in contact with the community.”

(Participant 1)

“At school, fellow workers have also commended on the changes that have been brought through the reading club, some have joined. Initially, I was the only one who had joined, but one

fellow worker later joined after noticing the change in children's reading ability."

(Participant 2)

Positive responses from beneficiaries

Across all six interviewees, their reading club members seemed happy about the reading clubs and the various activities the FUNda Leaders were conducting. One interviewee expressed that children enjoyed the reading sessions because they were free and happy to participate in the different reading activities. This may be because the reading sessions are non-formal. They create safe spaces where kids are free to express themselves. The quotations below support this feedback.

"Oh, the children enjoy the after-school reading activities, because they will be free and happy to read, sing and do plays. In most cases, they are always coming to me, reminding me of our after-school programme."

(Participant 3)

"seeing the children's happiness or seeing their eagerness to learn, and [partake in] the different activities ... you can see the excite[ment], they are very excited."

(Participant 5)

Community resistance

While the above results indicate that the community welcomed the FUNda Leader Network, some community members resisted the initiative when the clubs were initially established. Two interviewees highlighted that some community members were hazy about the network, and some would not release their children to attend. One of the FUNda Leaders explained that he did not know why. Below is what two of the interviewees had to say.

"But there are also some parents that have a fear I don't know why. I tried to understand why but failed to get reasons why."

(Participant 4)

"Uhm, when you start something new in the community, for sure there will be negatives."

(Participant 5)

Evaluation Question 3

a) To what extent do the FUNda Leaders think or feel the campaign is relevant?

Overall, interviewees remarked that the campaign is relevant, as it addressed their community needs. The FUNda Leaders indicated that previously they had difficulties accessing reading materials, children had poor reading skills, and children had more time to do unproductive things. One FUNda Leader said that previously they had a challenge accessing reading materials that kids enjoyed. Still, due to the campaign, they could now access these through Nal'ibali's reading supplements. The other FUNda Leader further expressed that the campaign is very relevant as it helped kids by creating spaces where kids can learn while playing. To show the relevance of the campaign are quotations below.

“The major challenge has been of unavailability of reading materials that kids can enjoy or connect with. We were so happy with Nal'ibali's reading supplements. Kids love reading these. You know kids love reading things that they can relate to and understand easily, so the supplements have helped us a lot.”

(Participant 1)

“The greatest challenge that was there was about the unavailability of reading materials, but since the coming of Nal'ibali, the situation has changed due to the reading supplements and stories they distribute.”

(Participant 4)

b) Using which medium or setting?

The question sought to understand the activities conducted by the FUNda Leaders and the activities they perceived to have been more effective towards enhancing literacy in their different communities. Several activities were mentioned. These include reading aloud, dramas or plays, playing games, writing poems, retelling stories, singing, and songwriting. Some of these activities are shown in the quotations below.

“I read for them. They take chances to read aloud, they write songs and singing songs, dancing, drama, reading festivals with other schools and the competitions.”

(Participant 1)

“I have books from Nal'ibali, so I give them the books we read stories, so what I do is, I read for them, then afterwards I assign one of them to read aloud. I then ask them questions to see

whether they understood the story. Some love to write stories, to sing and do dramas of stories we would have read.”

(Participant 3)

“We read, we sing... The children get bored easily, so we also sing and play to bring them back to the books.”

(Participant 5)

In addition, two interviewees stated the specific activities they strongly felt were effective towards growing a culture of reading. These were reading, writing, songwriting, singing, and drama. They felt these activities stirred interest in reading and enhanced the members’ comprehension. This is evidenced by the quotations below.

“Oh yes, reading is better and more effective.”

(Participant 3)

“Yes, children understand things that are done in form of a play or drama. I have seen that learners comprehend things that are done as a drama than those that are read to them... Children enjoy the drama, children like to imitate something, like imitating animals and other people.”

(Participant 1)

One participant maintained that no activity was more effective than the other. The FUNda Leader claimed that all activities were influential in their way. Hence he felt it was not ideal to regard some activities as better than others. This interviewee argued that children don’t enjoy doing the same activities during the reading sessions. Hence it is essential to do what they want or suggest during the sessions. The quotation below shows his remarks.

“. Mhm, when it comes to reading activities, I can mention all of them. ...children don’t like doing the same things repeatedly.”

(Participant 5)

Evaluation Question 4

To what extent are the recruited reading club members (activity beneficiaries) returning for the service?

Findings from the evaluation showed that the target beneficiaries of the reading clubs are returning for the reading sessions. However, the FUNda Leaders also shared that they have adopted

some strategies to improve attendance in instances with low attendance. Results for this evaluation question have been divided into two sections: the reading club’s attendance and strategies implemented to improve attendance. These will be illustrated in the preceding sections.

Reading clubs attendance

Feedback on reading club attendance has been summarised in Table 5 below. The table illustrates findings on reading club attendance and frequency of meetings. One interviewee from school-based reading clubs (see Table 5 Participant 1) revealed that there is consistent attendance since reading activities are conducted during school times, citing that children are, in a way, forced to attend with an average attendance of 35 members. The FUNda Leader further indicated that in cases where the children may be absent owing to sickness or other reason(s), that’s when attendance changes; otherwise, there is a consistent return for service by the children. The quotation below supports this finding.

“On attendance, it was more constant because remember this was done in class and we had time to read on our timetables. So every learner that was present in class would attend these reading sessions.”

(Participant 1)

Table 5.

Nature of Reading Club, Average Attendance, and Meeting Frequency

Participant Number	Nature of Reading Club	Average attendance Number
1	School-based	35
2	School-based	20
3	Community-based	15
4	Community-based	15
5	School-based	25
6	Community-based	10

However, one interviewee from a school-based (Participant 2 as presented in Table 5) after-school reading club mentioned that attendance in her reading club is not consistent with an average of 20 members because of other after-school programmes. Another interviewee from the school-based reading club (Participant 5 as presented in Table 5) stated that while their attendance is constant most of the time, with an average of 25 members, the challenge comes during rainy days because children will be in a hurry to go home hence resulting in low attendance. The reading club has an average of 25 reading club members.

“You know the attendance during some days is very low because children may decide to go for other activities.”

(Participant 2)

“The problem starts when it’s raining. Only four or five will come. Most of them after school they, rush home. So if the weather is alright, they will all come.”

(Participant 5)

All three interviewees FUNda Leaders of community-based reading clubs (Participants 3,4 and 6 in Table 5 above), revealed that attendance at reading clubs is not always consistent. One of the FUNda Leaders stated that at least fifty per cent of reading club members attend per reading session. The other interviewee said that their reading club records an average attendance of between 20-35 children per reading session. The quotations below illustrate this,

“Fifty per cent of them come, so I could say ten. Ten are always attending because I have a register I mark every time, so I am sure of ten out of these twenty every day.”

(Participant 6)

“Roughly an average of 20-35. In some cases, if a kid starts attending the Monday session, they will come up to Friday.”

(Participant 4)

Strategies implemented to improve attendance

The FUNda Leaders reported that to attract and or motivate their target participants to join and attend the reading sessions regularly, they adopted or used several mechanisms, which were grouped to form four sub-sections. These are using refreshments, use of Information

Communications Technology (ICT) equipment, lobbying for support, and conducting various activities. These are elaborated on in the following sections.

Use of refreshments

One participant from a community-based reading club conveyed that they used refreshments to motivate kids to attend and participate in the reading sessions. They explained that the purpose of the refreshments was to encourage the youths to join and attend the reading club and participate in the sessions. Supported by quotations below, the FUNda Leader indicated that they secured these refreshments through donations from local service providers.

“Yes, I use the fruit and snacks...here at kwaNobuhle, there is a Caltex garage that I wrote to ask for fruits, yes. To give me fruit enough for thirty learners who come three times a week to the reading club. So, what they do is sponsor two boxes of fruit twice a week. So, they know that when we are done with the reading club sessions, they will receive fruit. I also buy snacks when I have money on Fridays as we have short sessions, and they do not come over the weekend, then I add more snacks.”

(Participant 6)

Variety of activities

Another strategy that emerged from four interviews (three from school-based and one from community-based reading clubs) was conducting various activities. These activities included dramas, retelling stories, singing, and reading aloud. During their reading sessions, FUNda Leaders highlighted their efforts to secure diverse reading materials or stories per session. This was assumed to facilitate repeated attendance by the reading club members as they looked forward to new activities in each session. A commonly cited understanding was that the different activities sparked the kids’ interest in attending the session(s). The quotations below support this.

“Because every day we did something different from our previous reading session. New stories every day. Also, sometimes we would do dramas where we would be put into action what we would have read...Conducting different reading activities.”

(Participant 2)

“The stories and the drama sessions we did. Learners enjoyed acting and also reading aloud, taking turns to read.”

(Participant 1)

Linked to the variety of activities, one FUNda Leader stated that another mechanism she used was treating reading club members fairly. She added that she treated all members equally, and she believed this encouraged members to keep attending the sessions.

“I think because I’m trying by all means to accommodate all of them because I have to make sure I know them all by their names so that they will feel loved, and this makes them free to share their reading challenges. I don’t focus on one child that is better than others. I treat them equally, giving everyone a chance to participate.”

(Participant 5)

Lobbying for support

According to two FUNda Leaders, because some parents did not appreciate the importance of the reading sessions, the FUNda Leaders resorted to conducting home visits. The purpose is to lobby for parents' support by raising awareness of the benefits of joining and attending the reading sessions. They felt there was a low appreciation of the importance of reading because, in most cases, parents or guardians were not educated and would not release or encourage their children to attend the sessions. Thus, they resorted to educating the parents or guardians to enable inclusive efforts to improve children’s reading skills. The two FUNda Leaders revealed that reading club members’ attendance improved after the home visits. The quotations below illustrate this.

“...sometimes I have to visit them at their homes because some of the parents do not release them. Maybe they will be busy with house chores, so I will be forced to do house visits. Then at least when I am available, the parents can release their children..”

(Participant 6)

“Some of the parents don’t understand the importance of reading, especially those that didn’t have access to education. In cases like these, I have to pursue the parent first before I pursue the child. This will help the parent as well as the children so that we can work together towards improving the child s reading skills. It’s only after this that parents will realize the importance of reading and let their kids come to my place.”

(Participant 4)

Use of ICT equipment.

One interviewee explained that he used Information Communications Technology (ICT) equipment and computers to motivate kids to join and participate in the reading club. The interviewee explained that before joining the campaign, he was conducting computer lessons in

his community and later joined the campaign. He, therefore, used already existing resources, computers, to attract kids by teaching them how to use computers. He further mentioned that the school is his most significant stakeholder, encouraging and referring learners to attend his after-school programme (computer lessons and reading club). The quotation below supports this.

“I am not only doing reading as I highlighted earlier. I have computers which I teach children. So kids love computers; hence they come in their numbers... The school is the one that refers kids to my place. So I can say the school is one of the important stakeholders in my project.”

(Participant 4)

Evaluation Question 5

Are the programme activities being carried out with consistency as prescribed and planned?

Results for this evaluation question are divided into two sections: implementation fidelity and factors affecting the FUNda Leader Network. However, it is essential to note that while all six participants shared that they were conducting their activities as prescribed and planned, they also highlighted some of the factors affecting them while conducting their activities. The following sections will elaborate on these in detail

Implementation Fidelity

All participants indicated they were conducting their reading activities as prescribed and planned. According to Nal’ibali, after completing the literacy training, FUNda Leaders are encouraged to create and run reading clubs (Nal’ibali, 2020). Reading plans are encouraged to meet at least once per week, depending on the availability of the FUNda Leader (Nal’ibali, 2020). Therefore, reading clubs meeting frequency solely depends on the FUNda Leaders. Hence, meeting frequency is recorded based on each FUNda Leader’s reading club plan. As shown in Table 6 below, results from the evaluation show that all participants conducted their reading sessions at least more than once per week as prescribed by Nal’ibali.

Table 6.

Nature of Reading Club and Meeting Frequency

Participant Number	Nature of Reading Club	Meeting frequency Per week
1	School-based	3
2	School-based	2
3	Community-based	2
4	Community-based	5
5	School-based	2
6	Community-based	3

FUNda Leaders from the three community-based reading clubs revealed that their meeting frequency was based on their availability because they conduct the reading sessions during their free time. One FUNda Leader reported that they were meeting five days per week. This is because the interviewee is available during these days. Another FUNda Leader mentioned that they were meeting three times a week. The quotation below supports these findings,

“We meet three times a week. It is on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.”

(Participant 6)

“5 days a week from Monday to Friday. This is because I also I will be available during these days.”

(Participant 4)

Findings from the one school-based reading clubs indicated that the reading activities were being conducted as per the school timetable. The FUNda Leader said that reading is part of their school timetable, so the schedule determines their meeting frequency. To support this are quotations below,

“...we are using the timetable provided by the school. So we would conduct reading during our reading time as per our timetable.”

(Participant 1)

Factors affecting the FUNda Leader Network

While interviewees highlighted that they were conducting the reading activities as prescribed and planned, they also outlined three factors affecting their network. These factors affected the delivery of their activities, namely challenges with accessing reading materials, competition with other activities, and other commitments by the FUNda Leaders. The following section outlines these in detail.

Access reading material.

Two interviewees reported that although access to reading materials had improved due to the distribution of reading supplements by Nal’ibali, there was still a deficiency in communities. One interviewee stated that, even though they could access reading supplements, there were insufficient quantities to lend the materials to members to read at home. The quotation supports these findings.

“Eeh, I think the library is too far from them here in this community. And the books I have, I cannot borrow them to take them home because I fear that they might be lost or destroyed. Some of the children are eager to read, so they ask me to borrow them books to read at home, but I can't due to the reasons I mentioned.”

(Participant 6)

Competition with other activities.

One interviewee reported that another challenge that affected the FUNda Leader Network was competition with other programmes or commitments. The FUNda Leader explained that they were conducting their reading sessions after school. The school has other activities after school, like drum majorettes. The interviewee expressed that attendance is not consistent because of other school curricula, as some days, kids attend other activities. This is confirmed by the quotation below.

“The other thing I forgot to mention is that we did the reading lessons after school. So, other curriculum activities like sporting activities and drum majorettes. When the school started

drum majorettes many of the children that were coming to the reading sessions left to join there because it was a new thing.”

(Participant 2)

Other commitments by the FUNda Leaders

Two interviewees explained that they could not conduct more reading sessions due to other commitments. They said that their reading club members enjoyed the sessions and wanted more sessions, but this could not happen as FUNda Leaders had other obligations to attend to. For instance, one of the FUNda Leaders indicated that she was a learner and could only meet with her club twice weekly. The quotation provided below validates this.

“One challenge is that I was also busy with my school as I was also a learner. “

(Participant 3)

Evaluation Question 6

- a) To what extent is the programme reaching its target per annum?**
- b) What have been the reasons for over/under coverage?**

Findings from the research revealed that there are no stipulated targets for FUNda Leaders. The indication is that FUNda Leader’s recruitments and activities are based on their capacity and school enrollment. Hence, they could not answer the extent the programme is reaching its target per annum and the reasons for over or under-coverage. To support this are quotations below.

“It was just a class, the number of children that you have in your class, they are the ones we formed the reading club with, So we didn’t have a target but just the enrolled kids.”

(Participant 1)

“I didn’t have a target. I was helping those that I could help during my free time.”

(Participant 3)

“No, I do not want to lie to you, my sister. I do not have a target number yet. You are now challenging me to look into that.”

(Participant 6)

Evaluation Question 7

How sustainable is the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?

To answer this evaluation question, FUNda Leaders were asked what they thought would happen to their reading clubs if the campaign ended and also whether the communities would continue reading without the reading clubs. Two sentiments emerged from the information shared by the FUNda Leaders. These confirm that the reading activities would continue without the FUNda Leader Network and a possibility of the end of reading activities without the reading clubs. These will be elaborated on in the sections below.

Confirmation that the reading activities would continue without the campaign

Across all six interviewees, there was a confirmation that the reading activities in the reading clubs were not going to end in the case of the campaign's closure. Among other reasons, they stated that they would continue administering their activities because of the knowledge and skills imparted through the training and the network. The FUNda Leaders cited that they would utilise the knowledge and skills learned through the reading training to continue conducting their activities even without the support of Nal'ibali. Common among their responses was a plea that the campaign must not end because it has helped and continues to help create a reading culture in communities. Citations below validate these findings,

“Yoo, my wish is it mustn't end. But if it ends, we will still remain with the knowledge and skills that we learned through Nali'ibali. Even today, we are still doing what we were taught by Nal'ibali...”

(Participant 1)

“I think we will continue because of the skills that we were taught by Nal'ibali and also the reading materials that were given to us. With people like me who attend the Nal'ibali training and also have reading materials, I will not let the drive to teach reading end. I will continue with reading in my community.”

(Participant 3)

In addition to the above, one FUNda Leader also explained that she would use the supplements she received and keep safe to continue the reading sessions. The participant reiterated that the reading supplements would enable them to continue conducting the reading sessions. The FUNda Leader said,

“I think the reading activities will still continue because we have the library with books from Nal'ibali.”

(Participant 2)

Three participants from school-based reading clubs stated that there was also a confirmation that if the reading club were to end, the school community would continue with reading. They mentioned that this would be because reading had been mainstreamed into the school curricula and, thus, allocated slots on the schools' timetables. The quotations below illustrate their thinking.

“The school will continue because it is part of our school curriculum and timetable.”

(Participant 1)

“I think we will continue because it has been adopted and allocated time on the school activities.”

(Participant 5)

The possibility of the end of reading activities without the reading clubs

Three interviewees (five from the community and one school-based) indicated that in the case of the reading club ending, that is, FUNda Leaders closing the reading clubs and no more extended meetings, there was a possibility of the demise of reading activities in communities. The interviewees mentioned that the main reason would be the absence of someone to guide and motivate kids to read. Another reason cited reason one participant was that, without FUNda Leaders, communities would not conduct reading activities due to the absence of passionate individuals about reading and working with the youths. Quotations below demonstrate this

“I don't think so. I think it will be difficult because they won't be having someone like me to motivate and push or follow up on them.”

(Participant 6)

“I don't think the kids can do this without the reading group because, as I said, there are other curricula at school, so they will join other activities.”

(Participant 2)

Evaluation Question 8

How and in what ways have the FUNda Leader Network and its activities changed people? What success stories have been observed?

This section presents findings from what FUNda Leaders perceived as being the outcomes and success stories of the FUNda Leader Network. Interviewees were asked how their activities had changed their communities and to describe what they regarded as a success story. There were several changes that the interviewees outlined, and as such, findings are presented under seven sub-sections, namely, improved reading proficiency; creation of a reading culture; knowledge and confidence development; enhanced access to reading materials; reduced unproductive time and injuries; realisation of the importance of reading by parents; and unanticipated outcomes. The following sections present these outcomes and the related success stories.

Improved reading proficiency.

Five interviewees perceived that the campaign had significantly changed the children's reading abilities. Some reflected on how the members' reading skills were when they first joined the reading club compared to now, acknowledging remarkable improvements. Quotations illustrating this improvement in reading proficiency are provided below.

"...most of those that have passed through my reading classes are now fluent in reading."

(Participant 1)

"Before, some kids were not able or struggling to read and write, but when they joined the reading club, they improved."

(Participant 3)

Another success story from one of the FUNda Leaders relates to improved reading proficiency.

"At the school close to where I stay, there was this boy who was not able to read. I used to take him to my house after school alone and teach him how to read. So the teacher noticed the change in the kid's reading ability, and they asked him what had caused the improvement. The learner told them that it was Miss Nal'ibali (as what they used to call me). The teacher called me and thanked me for what I had done because of this. The boy won a reading champion at reading competitions that were done at school. This made me happy to see the change I brought in the

boy's life."

(Participant 3)

"So when I started the reading sessions, there is this boy that had difficulties in reading. You know the situation was bad. He could not even comprehend stories well. So I started working with the boy making sure that he at least get a chance to read with me like one on one. I would make time for him. So every day, I would read with him after the group session. You know, one day, when we were conducting the reading activities as a group, he volunteered to read aloud for others. I was even shocked because before, he was not confident to read for others. I was happy because not only did he improve his reading, but he also improved his confidence."

(Participant 5)

Creation of a reading culture.

All six interviewees acknowledged that their reading activities had helped grow a culture of reading. They mentioned that there was an improvement in reading frequency, as kids were now reading in their homes or during their spare time. It also emerged that kids were now asking their parents to buy books for them to read at home. Below is a quotation to support this.

"Kids now enjoy reading."

(Participant 4)

"They would read and retell stories in their classrooms or during their spare time."

(Participant 2)

"It promotes reading culture because I find that some recitations I do with them are also being done by others who are still young and have not joined the reading club."

(Participant 6)

"Learners wanted to read themselves, such that even when they were absent, they would always ask for what we would have done and do a recap on their own. The reading sessions provoked the love of reading in the learners."

(Participant 1)

Owing to the creation of the reading culture, two interviewees commented that reading club members were now inspiring non-members to read or join the reading sessions. One of the FUNda Leaders said he is happy knowing that the content he shares with his reading club is being conveyed to non-members. He expressed that even if some of these do not end up joining the club, the fact that they are receiving content or knowledge from members is a change on its own which

aids towards creating a reading community. Another FUNda Leader added that kids were now helping each other, that is, those with better reading abilities assisting struggling readers, thus creating a culture where children participate in reading for pleasure (without being told to do so). Quotations supporting these findings are provided below.

“...they were able to impart knowledge to others [students helping each other]. They would help learners that were struggling with reading and writing...They would do this in their classrooms or during their spare time [kids reading in their spare time without being told to do so]. They would also encourage them and show them how to [read or any reading activity], you know, so by so doing, the impact of the after-school reading sessions was more than I expected.”

(Participant 2)

“It [reading club] promotes reading culture because I find that in some recitations I do with them, they are also done by others who are growing up and have not been a part of the reading club yet, you see. So, there is a development no matter how small it is, because I also feel good when I see those that are not in the reading club singing the songs that are sung by these ones, even doing letter sounds, but they are not in the reading club. So, at least there are those who learn from the ones that attend the sessions.”

(Participant 6)

Similarly, one FUNda Leader added that participants who were absent during a reading session always came to her requesting access to the reading material(s) used during their absence. This was because those present would have briefed them about the previous session, hence their eagerness to read to catch up on what they missed. The FUNda Leaders expressed that the reading club had inspired an interest in reading as learners could now read on their own or during their spare time without being instructed to do so. The below quotation illustrates this.

“Also, at times, those who would have been absent would come and say, Ma’am, we need to read what you did yesterday. This would be after they would have heard other learners talking about the previous reading lesson. Learners wanted to read themselves, such that even when they were absent, they would always ask for what we would have done and do a recap on their own. The reading sessions provoked the love of reading in the learners.”

(Participant 1)

Enhanced access to reading materials.

Three FUNda Leaders remarked that the campaign and the FUNda Leader Network had improved reading abilities and created a reading culture, as well as access to reading materials. Previously, communities struggled to access reading materials, but this had since been enhanced

due to the reading supplements. Through the reading supplements, Nal'ibali creates reading materials (stories that relate well with children) in the eleven South African languages and distributes these to reading clubs, schools, and the public (via their website). Remarks from FUNda Leaders showed that reading supplements had significantly assisted by enhancing access to reading materials. This improvement is supported by the quotations below.

“We were so happy with Nal'ibali's reading supplements. Kids love reading these. The supplements have helped us a lot... Most learners enjoy the Nal'ibali stories because they relate more to them. They are easy to understand.”

(Participant 1)

“...since the coming of Nal'ibali, the situation [unavailability of reading materials] has changed due to the reading supplements and stories they send.”

(Participant 4)

Knowledge and confidence development.

Three interviewees specified that the reading club members' knowledge and confidence levels improved due to their activities. The FUNda Leaders said that the kids developed a zeal to read through the reading club activities, which refined their understanding of literature and general knowledge. They stated that owing to increased confidence levels, some of the members ended up doing things they were previously hesitant to do. Success stories provided in the quotations below support this.

“Some children were so confident that they applied for the opera school. The children were reading club members. They felt that could express themselves better. Their confidence had improved due to the reading activities. They went for the interviews and the screenings. Even though they were not accepted at the school, they showed that they were so confident, and that's why they applied.”

(Participant 2)

“...there was this child who couldn't read, who couldn't write, but it's not that she couldn't do that. She was not sure of herself, she was scared to express herself, and she was scared to express herself. She could see what others would be doing but felt like she couldn't due to a lack of confidence, like whatever she was going to say is wrong. So, since we started reading in my reading club, I have noticed that she has improved. She is becoming someone else she is supposed to be. Mhm, so I can say that is a success story, seeing her being confident in herself. Determined

To do things that she thought she could not like reading.”

(Participant 5)

“There was a girl around 7 to 10 years am not too sure of her age now, but when she joined the reading club, her reading was not good, and she was slow but later improved. I later realized that it's not like the child was not good, but instead, she wasn't confident in herself, and this affected her reading. Through the reading club and the reading aloud that we did, she developed confidence through seeing others reading and also participating.”

(Participant 6)

Reduced unproductive time.

Two interviewees stated that the campaign reduced unproductive activities and injuries. The interviewees mentioned that previously (before the reading club formation), the youths used to play in the streets, where they risked physical injuries. With the introduction of the reading club, this has since changed, as kids now use their spare time doing productive things like reading. Interviewees further explained that reading sessions had provided meaningful relief for parents in their children's after-school care. To support this are quotations below.

“Okay. When the children were not reading club members yet, I had not started it [the reading club]. They would sit at corners and roam the streets. But now they know that at a certain time, they have to go to the church [reading club venue] for our sessions. Then, those corners and their injuries from roaming the streets [kids injuring themselves during playtime, after school, in street corners] and their parents being sure that when their child is not home at a certain time, he or she is with so and so at a certain place. I think that is the change the reading club has brought.”

(Participant 6)

“So I also helped as kids were no longer going far away from home to play. It also in a way, helped their kids to do something productive after school.”

(Participant 3)

Unanticipated outcomes.

One interviewee explained that while the network aims to help kids grow a culture of reading, being part of the network has also contributed to their (FUNda Leaders) knowledge development. The FUNda Leader explained that their role as reading activists in communities has positively enriched their reading life and broadened their knowledge base. This is because they are

reading more and contributing to their knowledge development. The quotation below validates this:

“I enjoy it because, besides the fact that I help to teach children how to read books, I also get help because I am forced to be someone eager to read books so that I can be more knowledgeable.”

(Participant 6)

Summary

In summary, overall results revealed that the FUNda Leader Network is a great initiative that has facilitated the development of reading abilities and created a reading culture amongst the youth serviced in the Eastern Cape province. FUNda Leaders were happy to share what they referred to as their success stories which show in detail how their activities boosted the youths’ reading abilities and confidence, among other outcomes mentioned. The network also enhanced access to reading materials by distributing reading supplements in the local languages. Although some interviewees pointed out that they had faced community resistance, through the strategies adopted, they managed to raise awareness among parents and the community, resulting in a realisation of the importance of reading by the community. While some members would carry on even if Nal’ibali ended, others rely on the support they receive from Nal’ibali, the guidance from the FUNda Leaders and the reading materials.

Chapter Four: Discussions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the discussion and recommendations based on the results presented in the previous chapter. The discussion and recommendations are offered based on the implementation and service outcomes framework (outcome measures) by Proctor et al. (2011) and the evaluation questions which guided the evaluation.

Acceptability

To what extent are the FUNda Leaders satisfied with the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?

This implementation outcome measure aimed to understand the FUNda Leaders' perceptions and satisfaction with the intervention components and implementation strategies. Findings from the study revealed that overall, FUNda Leaders were happy with the FUNda Leader Network and its activities. Nal'ibali stated that the FUNda Leader Network targeted individuals passionate about reading and working with kids (Nal'ibali, 2017). It was evident from the data collection that all interviewees thoroughly enjoyed working with children, which could underpin their acceptability of the programme. Hanemann (2015) and Nicolas et al. (2020) noted that using volunteers in literacy programmes increases the chances of the effectiveness of interventions due to the volunteers' willingness to educate and improve literacy skills amongst the targeted beneficiaries.

The results indicate that Nal'ibali is likely targeting and attracting the correct volunteers to the FUNda Leader Network. This is a crucial implementation component of the programme that should be maintained.

Adoption

How is the intervention uptake? The evaluation aimed to investigate the intervention uptake through this implementation outcome measure. In other words, how many community members participated in the reading club(s)? The evaluation revealed remarkable attendance, which saw reading club members repeatedly attending the sessions. Two key reasons underpin this uptake. Firstly, the FUNda Leaders were skilled in creating safe spaces and administering activities where the youth could confidently express themselves. Secondly, as the target beneficiaries, the

youth enjoyed the various activities and felt good when their skills improved. The FUNda Leaders commended the training provided with Nal'ibali. They testified that the movement had empowered them with skills and knowledge to teach reading and related activities. The contribution of the use of trained literacy tutors is apparent from the extensive literature review conducted.

Haneman (2015) posits that the reading pedagogy, especially issues to do with the selection of reading content and methodology of administering activities, are vital towards warranting the effectiveness of literacy initiatives. Similarly, Van der Berg et al. (2016) avers that poor reading pedagogy is one of the reasons influencing poor literacy abilities among the youth in South Africa. Thus, the implementation components of the campaign are strategic in ensuring the adoption of the network and its activities. Hence these should be upheld.

Despite the high uptake, it is essential to note that some community members were unsupportive of the reading clubs. In these instances, FUNda Leaders lobbied for support by conducting home visits with parents. Through these visits, they raised awareness among parents and guardians of the importance of reading skills. This strategy proved fruitful as the FUNda Leaders noted an improvement in attendance after these visits. Inclusive stakeholder participation affects the effectiveness of any intervention (Hanemann, 2015). Thus the FUNda Leaders are praised for their efforts in this regard.

Evidence shows that when parents appreciate reading, children are more likely to be readers (Haneman, 2015). To ensure continuous adoption of the FUNda Leader Network, Nal'ibali could consider partnering with an organisation that implements literacy activities for adults in the same communities. Having both a youth and adult intervention should create an inclusive and comprehensive approach towards creating a vibrant reading culture in communities. Additionally, by imparting literacy skills and a reading culture to parents, communities will likely start reading at an early age.

In line with these points, it is recommended that Nal'ibali partner with organisations that focus on the literacy development of adults to achieve an inclusive and more sustainable approach to addressing the literacy needs of the communities.

Appropriateness

To what extent do the FUNda Leaders think or feel the campaign is relevant? Using which medium or setting?

This implementation outcome measure aimed to understand how the intervention responds to the identified social need. The evaluation findings revealed that the FUNda Leader Network activities were perceived as relevant and appropriate in addressing the literacy needs of the respective communities. Across all interviewees, FUNda Leaders shared how several literacy areas were transformed due to the network and its activities. Through the campaign, FUNda Leaders were trained to create, manage and run reading clubs, and communities were also provided with reading supplements.

Results demonstrated that the campaign also positively contributed towards the availability of relatable reading materials through the distribution of age-appropriate supplements in local languages. FUNda Leaders expressed that, before the campaign, communities were experiencing challenges with accessing reading materials, but through the campaign, this had improved. According to the literature reviewed, the availing of relevant and relatable (age-appropriate and in a familiar language(s) reading materials contributed towards improvements in reading comprehension (Ama Baafra Abeberese et al., 2011; see also Christina & Vinogradova, 2017; Desmond, 2012; Friedlander et al., 2016; Hanemann, 2015; Hanemann & McKay, 2019; Leitão et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2011; Nassimbeni & Desmond, 2011; Nicolas et al., 2020; Ntuli & Pretorius, 2005; Villiger et al., 2019). Based on these results, it is inferred that the choice of reading materials can also facilitate or hinder the success of literacy programmes (Hanemann & Mackay, 2019).

Feasibility

To what extent are the recruited reading club members (activity beneficiaries) returning for the service?

This implementation outcome measure aimed to assess the extent to which the implementation of the FUNda Leader Network and its activities are considered achievable. FUNda Leaders stated that reading club members were part of the club and the various activities

conducted. Evidence from the findings showed that there was repeated attendance. As a result, the youth always looked forward to the reading sessions. This may be attributed to how the activities were administered and the strategies that the FUNda Leaders employed to improve attendance, including using refreshments, lobbying for support, conducting various activities, and using ICT equipment.

Fidelity

Are the programme activities being carried out with consistency as prescribed and planned?

Through this implementation outcome measure, the evaluation aimed to assess the degree to which the FUNda Leader Network activities are conducted or implemented as prescribed. The results revealed that several activities are being administered in the reading clubs, including reading aloud, dramas or plays, playing games, writing poems, retelling stories, singing, and story writing. These activities form part of the FUNda Leaders training by Nal'ibali (Nali'bali, 2017). Thus, one can argue that the activities are implemented with fidelity.

Nal'ibali does not prescribe reading club meeting frequency but proposes that sessions are conducted at least once a week based on school activities and FUNda Leader availability (Nal'ibali, 2017). Findings indicated that the frequency of reading sessions ranged between one to five times per week, with a mean of three. Hence, indicating that the reading sessions were implemented as recommended.

Penetration

To what extent is the programme reaching its target per annum? What have been the reasons for over/under coverage?

This implementation outcome measure aimed to understand the extent to which the FUNda Leader Network and its activities are reaching the intended beneficiaries. Findings from the evaluation showed that the FUNda Leaders did not have any targets in terms of reach. Instead, they only worked with youths willing to be part of the reading club (in community-based reading clubs) and those allocated to their specific classes (school-based reading clubs). One FUNda Leader specified that although he did not have a target, he was pleased that reading club content

was being shared with non-members. Thus, indicating the content penetrates through interactions amongst the youth in communities.

It is, however, recommended that Nal'ibali encourages FUNda Leaders to have targets and boundaries of their coverage areas for easing monitoring and avoiding redundancy in programs and activities. Studies by Hanemann (2015) showed the need for literacy programmes to have a comprehensive data management system that captures learner profiles, including age, location, etc. (in the case of Nal'ibali, learners are represented by Reading Club members). These, according to her, enable easy monitoring and evaluation from setting indicators, tracking them, and establishing coverage of the programme. Therefore, for Nal'ibali, FUNda Leaders having targets will help the network show how much they cover per year. This will help Nal'ibali to have a comprehensive idea of their coverage and the effectiveness of the network component. In a way, this data will capture reasons for under and over-coverage.

Based on this discussion, the evaluator recommends that Nal'ibali sets targets and boundaries for FUNda Leaders. This will facilitate easier monitoring of areas of coverage as well as avoidance of redundancy in programmes and activities. Aligned with this, it would also be helpful for Nal'ibali to develop a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and reporting system. This can be achieved by adopting literacy assessment or tracking tools. These tools can enable rigorous tracking of the implementation and short-term outcomes more systematically. This will then provide the FUNda Leaders with guidance on focused improvement areas. They could receive collated club data as well as individual beneficiary data. This should also enable identifying the features that determine whether the activities are practical (Grigg et al., 2016). Implementing large-scale literacy programmes like the Nal'ibali campaign requires a monitoring and evaluation system that captures comprehensive data before administering the activities, during, and at the end (quantitative and qualitative) (Hanemann, 2015).

Sustainability

How sustainable is the FUNda Leader Network and its activities?

Through this implementation outcome measure, the evaluation aimed to assess the extent to which the FUNda Leader Network and its activities can be maintained or be part of the

community's daily life. The results revealed a high probability of the FUNda Leader Network and its activities continuing in the case of Nal'ibali withdrawing its support. Several reasons were outlined, including the knowledge that FUNda Leaders have adequately empowered them to create, run and administer the reading activities. Their role has been further strengthened by the availability of reading materials acquired from Nal'ibali. Studies on various Literacy for Sustainable development Programmes published by UNESCO (2015) revealed several measures for the sustainability of these initiatives. The reasons outlined for sustainability include a positive acceptance of the initiatives, support from the responsible authorities (which, in most cases, the government ministries and or departments), active participation of target beneficiaries, and the general community (UNESCO, 2015).

For Nal'ibali, efforts to ensure the sustainability of the network are evident. These include the deliberate targeting of community volunteers who are passionate about reading and working with children. This helps foster a sense of ownership within communities, augmented by partnering with the DoE and imparting knowledge and skills on creating, managing and implementing reading activities. The case of Nal'ibali's partnership with the DoE is stimulating the noticeable use of skills and reading materials in schools. Another noteworthy observation is that, in schools, reading has been incorporated as part of the education curricula and timetables (Cillers & Bloch, 2018). Thus, Nal'ibali is applauded for facilitating the mainstreaming of these implementation components.

Despite the above, the FUNda Leaders also revealed that communities might not engage in reading activities if they discontinue their reading clubs. They cited that this would be because of the unavailability of reading activists or tutors to guide and motivate members to read. According to UNESCO (2015), these incidents are common in literacy programmes, with some of the influencing factors being programmes not being comprehensive in their approach. That is, programmes can focus on adults leaving out the youths or vice versa, thereby building a persistent presence of illiterate community members. Furthermore, the sustainability of literacy initiatives fundamentally depends on the community's zeal, meaning if people are not motivated, the possibility of them engaging in literacy activities is low (UNESCO, 2015). Hence, there is a need

for a comprehensive transgenerational approach to implementing literacy programmes, as highlighted above (Adoption section).

Effectiveness

How and in what ways have the FUNda Leader Network and its activities changed people? What success stories have been observed?

This service outcome measure aimed to reveal the extent to which the FUNda Leader Network and its activities are improving reading and or literacy through capturing success stories from the FUNda Leaders. Findings from the evaluation revealed that the FUNda Leader Network is a great initiative that has facilitated the development of reading abilities, enhancing the availability of reading materials, creating a reading culture, knowledge and confidence development, and realising the importance of reading by parents. The interviewees shared several success stories which illustrate how the FUNda Leader Network had changed people's perceptions, reading frequency, and skills. Interesting to note is the fact that the FUNda Leader Network also managed to affect the realisation of an unanticipated outcome - the knowledge development of the FUNda Leaders.

Remarks on the implementation outcomes framework

Proctor et al.'s (2011) implementation outcome taxonomy were beneficial for this study as it enabled the evaluator to capture detailed implementation outcomes of the FUNda Leader network. The definitions suggested by Proctor et al. (2011) on each implementation outcome measure were also insightful and relevant in understanding whether the intervention is achieving the intended outcomes or addressing the identified needs. The framework enhanced the selection of appropriate/effective implementation strategies to achieve the programme outcomes: acceptance enhancement, adoption, fidelity, sustainability, penetration, appropriateness, and feasibility. Overall, the framework's advantage is that it captures contextual factors that may be influencing the success or failure of an intervention. That is through capturing the attitudes (acceptability) and behaviours (adoption).

Conclusion

The study examined the implementation outcomes of the Nal'ibali campaigns' FUNda Leader Network and its activities. The evaluation revealed that the FUNda Leaders, the youths, and the community are generally happy with the network and its activities. Findings also showed that the implementation of the networks' activities contributed towards improving reading proficiency, knowledge, and confidence development and creating a reading culture. The evaluation indicates that the implementation components of the campaign essentially aided in the achievement of the intended cause. These components include selecting individuals or volunteers who are passionate about reading and working with youths; training FUNda Leaders; distributing reading materials in the eleven local languages; and using relatable activities.

Overall, with literacy programmes remaining essential in South Africa, Nal'ibali and their partners are applauded for their efforts to improve youth literacy. In particular, the implementation components strive to positively address the challenges the youth are encountering through a combination of school-based and community-based reading clubs. Also, the campaign has nationwide coverage recognising the eleven official South African local languages. Thus, making a significant contribution to a national need and priority area.

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Appendix A – FUNda Leader Semi-structured Interview Guide

Date.....

Participant ID.....

Province Location.....

Implementation Outcome questions

Acceptability:

1. Do you enjoy being part of the FUNda Leader Network?
2. Are you happy with the reading club you created?

Adoption:

3. Who are your targeted reading club members? (*probe if the answer doesn't involve adults or children*).
4. What has been the reaction of the community to your reading activities?
5. How many members of the community join your activities?

Appropriateness:

6. What do you think the literacy needs of your community are?
7. What are your different reading club activities?
8. How do your activities help literacy in the community? (Which activities or strategies help to grow a culture of reading)
9. Are some activities better than others? (ascertain which activities are most effective)
10. Is there more that you can do to respond to the need?

Feasibility:

11. Tell me about repeat attendance at your reading club
12. On average how often will one community member visit the reading club?

13. How many members are repeat members? In other words, keep coming back to the reading club? (*Probe for specifics*)

14. What motivates your reading club members to continue attending the reading sessions? (*Probe for reasons that have enhanced or reduced attendance*)

Fidelity:

15. How many times are you meeting with your reading club members?

16. Are there any factors that are increasing or reducing your meeting frequency?

Penetration:

17. How many members of the community should you serve in a year?

18. Are you reaching this target? (*Probe why / why not*)

19. What strategies are you using to attract your target participants to join and attend reading clubs and or session(s)?

Sustainability:

20. If the Nal'ibali campaign ended, what do you think will happen to your reading club?

21. Do you think community members will continue to read without the club?

22. What mechanisms have you used to sustain your reading club(s)?

Service Outcome questions

1. *Effectiveness:*

23. How have your activities changed the community?

24. Can you describe a success story from the community? (How your club impacted someone's life) - *Probe for details*

This is the end of our interview. Do you have any thoughts you would like to share regarding this study?

Thank you very much for your time. Have a great day.

Appendix B – Ethics Approval Letter



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UCT Commerce Faculty Office

10 12 2020

Stella Tariro Sithole

School of Management Studies

University of Cape Town

REF: REC 2020/12/010

An Implementation outcome evaluation for the Netball FUNda Leader Network

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid until 31-Dec-2021.

Your clearance may be renewed upon application.

Please be aware that you need to notify the Ethics Committee immediately should any aspect of your study regarding the engagement with participants as approved in this application, change. This may include aspects such as changes to the research design, questionnaires, or choice of participants.

The ongoing ethical conduct throughout the duration of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

We wish you well for your research.

2020.12.10
09:16:32 +02'00'

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Appendix C – Consent letter



Dear Participant

My name is **Stella Sithole**. I am a student at the University of Cape Town completing my Masters degree in Programme Evaluation. As a requirement of the degree, I am evaluating the Nal'ibali's FUNda Leader Network. The information you provide will help Nal'ibali to understand how you implement your reading activities and to hear about success stories in your communities as a result of your reading club and activities.

The research has been approved by the Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw/stop at any time, with no consequence. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Your identity will be kept anonymous. Your responses will be associated with a participant ID and location.

Please note this interview will be recorded to enable transcription.

Are you comfortable to participate in this research?