



**An Assessment of Parents' Book-sharing Quality, Children's Level of Engagement, and the
Effects on Children's Verbal Exchanges**

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List of Acronyms

ABQ	Assessment of Book-sharing Questionnaire
AWC	Adult Word Count
CDI	Communicative Development Inventory
COB	Children's Orientation to Book Reading
CT	Conversational Turn
CTC	Conversational Turn Count
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
DG	Douglas George
GQI	Generic Qualitative Inquiry
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NAVE	Naturalistic Assessment of Verbal Exchange
SD	Standard Deviation
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UCT	University of Cape Town

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Abstract

A process evaluation study was conducted for the Book-sharing for Families Programme, implemented by Living Hope in South Africa. Living Hope is a faith-based organisation that was established in the year 2000 with a vision of reaching people for Christ, bringing hope, and breaking the despair of poverty and disease.

The Book-sharing for Families Programme aims to strengthen capacity of parents and caregivers to foster positive relationships and provide enriching environment for their children that enable them grow and develop pre-literacy skills (including language development, concentration development, and book handling skills) that are needed for children to be ready to acquire reading when they go to school. The programme targets parents of low socioeconomic status and children aged 30 to 60 months, and it is implemented using a seven-week curriculum.

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the extent to which the programme achieved its short-term outcomes (effect on children's verbal exchange) and to gain a deeper understanding of how well the programme was implemented. Children's verbal exchange was assessed before and after the end of the programme using the Naturalistic Assessment of Verbal Exchanges tool, and the children's level of orientation to book-sharing was assessed using the Children Orientation to Book-sharing (COB) rating scale. This was supplemented by data collected through interviews with the programme participants.

Whereas the findings of the evaluation revealed that the programme did not have a statistically significant affect on children's verbal exchange, the programme had positive effects on the participants. The book-sharing interactions deepened children's orientation to shared reading, which according to the literature reviewed impacts on other child's development domains, including language and vocabulary acquisition. This study developed a logic model to guide the development and evaluation of similar programmes. The study introduced COB as a new tool which Living Hope had not previously used to supplement the existing tools and assist in examining the level of children's interest, engagement, and attention to book-sharing activities.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This process and outcome evaluation was conducted for the Book-sharing for Families Programme, implemented by Living Hope in South Africa. The programme targets parents of low socioeconomic status and children aged 30 to 60 months. The programme involves implementing a seven-week curriculum during which parents are trained on how to ask questions and guide conversation, praising the child, and encouraging them to talk about different parts of the pictures and story.

The overall objective of this evaluation was to examine the extent to which the programme was achieving its short-term outcomes, and to assess how well the programme was implemented. Specifically, the evaluation aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of the book-sharing programme on children's verbal exchange and assess whether the programme was implemented in line with its design. Children's verbal exchanges were assessed before and after the end of the programme, while the quality of programme implementation was assessed through gathering information on stakeholders' perceptions of the programme

Background on Book-sharing Interventions for Children

Many of South African children perform below the curriculum in the key skills of reading and literacy and the learning deficits that they acquire in primary school career grow over time to negatively impact on their education attainment at high level (Spaull, N. 2013). To De Witt (2009), quoted in Cooper et al., (2014), this underperformance is due the failure to prioritize early literacy and language development among the poorer communities of South Africa. Living Hope, with the support of Mikhulu Trust therefore developed and delivered the book-sharing and early stimulation support to parents to overcome this learning crisis. After a five-year period of the programme implementation, an evaluation was needed to examine the extent to which the programme was being implemented according to the design and assess whether it was achieving its intended short-term outcomes.

Book-sharing

Turan and Topcu (2018) define book-sharing as an interactive activity involving an adult and a child, in which an adult reads a book to a child or a group of children (Korat & Shamir 2007, p.249),

with the expectation of different interactions and engagement rates, interest and participation from the child. Reynolds and Burton (2017) define book-sharing as an interactive engagement between a child and an adult that is based on the principle of "Serve-and-Return". In this respect, the infant serves through babbling and gestures (Bidgood 2016, quoted in O'Neill, n.d) while the adult returns the serve by responding in a meaningful way (National Science Council, 2007 as quoted in Levitt & Eagleson, 2018, p. 82). Vally, Murray, Tomlinson, and Cooper (2015) explain that during book-sharing activity, an adult should not simply read a book to a child but rather, the process should involve an interactive exchange led by the child and supported by an adult who attends to a child's interest.

Additionally, Whitehurst et al. (1988), quoted in Dowdall et al. (2020, p. 4) clarify that book-sharing is different from the conventional reading of a book to a child because it involves the use of interactive and evocative behaviours such as asking the child open-ended questions and praising the child for participation.

Child-adult book-sharing can take different forms including dialogic reading (Blom-Hoffman et al., 2006), interactive shared book reading (Reynolds and Burton, 2017). Vally (2012, p. 619) explains that during book-sharing interactions caregivers and parents are sensitive to the child's interest and they praise the child, support a child's learning and encourage verbal behaviours.

Book-sharing Settings

Book-sharing interventions are usually conducted in sessions involving a relatively small manageable number of parents and facilitators (Whitehurst et al., 1988). During such sessions, parents are taught crucial book-sharing skills (Dowdall et al., 2020, p. 5; Whitehurst et al., 1988; Zevenbergen et al. 2003) and the interventions involve participatory role-play between the child and an adult (Dowdall et al., 2020; Mol et al., 2008; Zevenbergen, 2003).

During child-parent interactions in the shared book activity, the child utters some words, and the parent expands the response by rephrasing and adding some information and asks the child again so that the child clearly understands the concept in the shared book (Simsek & Erdogan, 2015). Zevenbergen and Whitehurst (2003, p. 172) explain that when children say something about the book, an adult should repeat what they say and add a few or more words so that a child can vocalise it.

Book-sharing activities can be conducted in numerous settings (Blom-Hoffman et al., 2007). They can be conducted in community centres (Vally et al., 2015), preschool halls (Mangen et al., 2019) and participants' homes (Huebner & Payne, 2010), with individual child, small groups of children, or a classroom-based practices involving learners and a caregiver (Cárdenas et al., 2020). Conducting book-sharing sessions in and around clinics and paediatric rooms is a recent development (Needlman, 1993; Klass et al., 2009; Canfield et al., 2020). Dowdall (2020) noted the importance of using a video and online platform to conduct book-sharing trainings, citing cost efficiency and consistency in delivering the intervention as crucial benefits. Kleeck (2006) stresses the importance of starting book-sharing interventions with children during their early development stages. He also highlights that cultural context should be considered when designing and assessing the effectiveness of a book-sharing intervention.

Benefits of Book-sharing

The benefits of shared book reading stem from the understanding of Bowlby's evolutionary theory of attachment. Attachment behaviour involves seeking, getting attracted and maintaining closeness to another individual (Bowlby, 1982, p.166). Bowlby (1982) explains that children bond with caregivers during the initial years of development, and these bonds have a lifelong impact on children. The attachment of a child to an adult serves to keep the infant close to the adult, thus improving the child's chances of survival (Bowlby, 1982, p.176; Simpson, 1999).

Reed, Van, and McKelvey (2009, p. 7) in investigating whether the domains of parenting behaviour assessed through the Parenting Skills Assessment (PSA) represented the actual domains observed found, among others, that the iterative process involving the interactions of the parents and children through literacy activities such as shared reading improves parents' parenting skills manifested in the form of improved nurturing practices of the parent (Reed et al., 2009, p. 8).

In examining the value of reading aloud to children, Duursma, Augustyn and Zuckerman (2008, p. 556) found that shared book reading increases a child's exploring skill and understanding of the environment and that the child gains coping skills, irrespective of the socioeconomic status of the child.

In their study to assess the efficacy of home-based intervention that involved sharing a picture book, Whitehurst et al. (1988) used a pre-test-post-test with a control group. Children in the

intervention group statistically significantly performed better in terms of expressive language ability compared to those in the control group. Similarly, using a randomised control trial, Whitehurst et al. (1994) analysed the effects of a picture book-reading programme on children in day-care centres in USA, and statistically significant programme effects were found on measures of child's vocalization.

Additionally, Vally et al. (2015) in estimating the effect of book-sharing interactions on children's language and attention in South Africa, they conducted a randomised controlled trial. Their study revealed promising results for low- and medium-income countries because earlier studies in this area were mainly conducted in high-income countries. Children for caregivers in the experimental group had a statistically significantly larger increase in the number of words they could vocalise and exhibited higher levels of attention during shared reading.

In Bangladeshi, Opel, Ameer, and Aboud (2009) tested the efficacy of shared book reading on preschoolers, using a pre-post with a control group design. Compared to children in the control group, the mean vocabulary scores for children in the intervention group statistically showed a significant increase from 26% at baseline to 54%.

Using a cluster randomised controlled trial with four treatment arms and one control arm, Knauer et al. (2020) examined the effects of a book-sharing on children of diverse socioeconomic status (SES) in rural Kenya. The findings of their study showed that children benefited from the intervention irrespective of their SES and that the intervention increased children's level of engagement, orientation, and attention to book-sharing interactions. Similarly, Blom-Hoffman et al., (2006) investigated children's verbalisation abilities using a randomised control group, repeated measures design. Children in the experiment group had a statistically significant improvement in vocalisation compared to children in the control group whose parents were not engaged in shared book reading.

Child-adult shared book reading facilitates social bonding between the parent and a child, but this depends on whether the nature of interactions is responsive caregiving and interactions or controlling and punitive interactions (Pungello et al., 2009, p. 553). Shared book reading between a child and an adult increases the amount and diversity of communicative signs (Cárdenas et al., 2020, p. 1; Moreno-Núñez, and Miranda-Zapata 2020, p.4)

Additionally, it is stated that with adults' mediation, children engage in more complex triadic (adult-child-object) interactions (Cárdenas et al., 2020, p. 2), and this, in turn, makes the child used to the surrounding environment during the first 24 months of life (Rodríguez et al., 2018, quoted in Cárdenas et al., 2020, p. 5). This further suggests that social interactions between a child and a knowledgeable adult facilitate the child's language and cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978, quoted in Vally et al., 2015, p. 866).

Moreover, in describing the foundation for and structural features of a relationship-based model to promote school readiness in infants and their families, Edwards & Knoche (2008, p. 265) explain that the focus on parent-child interactions such as book-sharing and writing glossary lists as the medium of children's learning before school entrance allows the parent and child to develop a relationship that is built on trust and support, and this is likely to endure across the school years. This permits children to learn about critical social, linguistic, cognitive, and motor skills that will benefit them when they start school.

The Implementing Organisation

Established in the year 2000 through the grassroots efforts of a local church, Living Hope is a faith-based non-profit organisation whose vision is to reach people for Christ, bringing hope and breaking the despair of poverty and disease. Living Hope undertakes community development through educational, social, income generation, and health-related programmes and plays a vital role in the prevention, care and treatment of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses (Living Hope n.d. <https://www.livinghope.co.za/>).

Living Hope is currently operating in Masiphumelele, Muizenberg, Mzamomhle, Ocean View, Overcome Heights, and Red Hill regions of South Africa (Living Hope n.d. <https://www.livinghope.co.za/>). Appendix 14 provides an overview of Living Hope's scope of activities.

The Programme Description

The programme description presented here is informed by data that were collected from reviewing the organisation's documents, including the programme proposal, snapshot, annual reports, website, and interviews conducted with the programme manager and director.

The Book-sharing for Families Programme aimed to support parents and caregivers to build positive relationships and provide effective stimulations for their young children by equipping them with the pre-literacy skills (including language development, concentration development, and book handling skills) that are needed for children to be ready to acquire reading when they go to school.

The Book-sharing for Families Programme was developed by two professors, Peter J. Cooper, and Lynne Murray from the University of Reading, after the success of a book-sharing trial conducted in South Africa. The trial produced important findings relevant to South Africa (Vally et al., 2015). The results were that young children whose caregivers participated in the book-sharing training programme demonstrated: i) improved language (both receptive and expressive); ii) improved ability to concentrate for longer periods of time; iii) improved social understanding; and iv) children who started with the lowest scores for language and concentration at the end of the study had caught up with their more advanced peers. Subsequently, in 2015, Professor Peter J. Cooper and Lynne Murray established the Mikhulu Trust to disseminate dialogic book-sharing. The programme is funded by the World Childhood Foundation, Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, Jim Joel Fund/Childwick Trust, University of Reading, and DG Murray Trust (Mikhulu Trust, 2020).

Living Hope started implementing the programme in 2018, and it is currently operational in the Ocean View, Masiphumelele and Capricorn regions of South Africa, targeting parents of low socioeconomic status and children aged 30 to 60 months.

Capricorn: At Capricorn, poverty, crime, and violence rates are prevalent, with many active gangs and widespread drug use affecting all parts of society. Facilities in the settlement are scarce; for instance, a primary school was opened for the first time in January 2008, and there is no medical clinic in the immediate area (Living Hope. <https://www.livinghope.co.za/about/communities/capricorn/>).

Ocean View: Located about forty-five kilometres from Cape Town, Ocean View has a population of 42,000 people. The settlement is affected by a high rate of unemployment, widespread drug use, alcoholism, gangs, prostitution, dysfunctional families, and violence (Living Hope. <https://www.livinghope.co.za/about/communities/ocean-view/>).

Masiphumelele: Infection and disease outbreaks affect thousands of people in Masiphumelele; approximately 23-28% of the population is HIV positive, and many of these are

affected by tuberculosis. As a result, there are many orphaned children and children-headed families. The unemployment and crime rates are high (Living Hope. <https://www.livinghope.co.za/about/communities/masiphumelele/>).

Implementation of the Programme

The implementation of the programme starts with recruiting a cohort of parents and children. The parents undergo a seven-week training on how to do the book-sharing sessions with the children. The parents attend the training session with the target children. The training is conducted by Living Hope facilitators, who Mikhulu Trust trained. Facilitators of diverse backgrounds are trained, provided they are literate, have basic computer knowledge, and are committed to delivering the programme immediately after the training. The seven weekly workshops of 90 minutes each focus on a different technique and use a particular wordless picture book. The curriculum includes Session 1: Building and enriching; Section2: Linking; Session 3: Numbering and comparisons; Session 4: Feelings; Session 5: Intentions; Session 6: Perspectives; and Session 7: Relationships (Living Hope, 2020).

During the training sessions, parents are taught eight key competencies to exhibit during the adult-child book-sharing interactions (Zevenbergen and Whitehurst, 2003, p. 171-173; Mikhulu Trust, 2020). These are highlighted in Table 1 below:

Basic Competences Emphasised during Book-sharing Training

Table 1

Basic Competences Emphasised during Book-sharing Training

Key Competencies	Explanation
<i>Asking open-ended questions</i>	The child is asked specific questions about objects in the book, attributes of the objects, and elements of the story. Ask the child to name the objects pictured in the book and ask simple questions about the pictures.
<i>Follow answers with questions</i>	Follow the child's answers to questions with other related questions. For example, if the child can label an object in the book, ask questions about the attributes of the object (e.g., "Yes, that is a dog. What colour is the dog?")

<i>Expand what the child says</i>	Repeating what the child says serves to reinforce the child's verbalisation, letting the children know that they are correct (e.g., "Yes, that is a wagon").
<i>Help the child as needed</i>	Sometimes the questions initially asked of children are difficult for them to answer. Answer the question posed to the child and have them repeat your verbalisation (e.g., "That is called an octopus. Can you say octopus?").
<i>Praise and encourage</i>	Praise the child's attempt to talk about the book. Never say no to the child.
<i>Follow the child's interest</i>	If the child begins to talk about a part of a picture in the book, follow their interest and encourage them to talk more. Never say no to a child.
<i>Have fun</i>	Children enjoy shared reading when adults take a game-like, turn-taking approach to using the techniques – <i>modelling</i>

Note. The book-sharing competences. From Dialogic reading: A shared picture book reading intervention for pre-schoolers (p.171-173), by Zevenbergen and Whitehurst (2003 p.171-173).

During the training sessions, parents practice what they are taught through a demonstration involving the parents and facilitators. The mothers receive individual, didactic instruction in the book-sharing techniques; the facilitator and assistant facilitator demonstrate to the parents how to conduct book-sharing sessions, in this case, the assistant facilitator pretends to be a two- or three-year-old child (Vally, 2012; Vally et al., 2015, p.5. After the demonstration by the facilitators, the parents then practice book-sharing sessions with assistant facilitators. In the end, the facilitator provides feedback to the parents based on the observation made during the practice.

Programme implementation is preceded by a pre-assessment of parents and their children to determine the pre-intervention children's verbalisation. Then, the parents concurrently undergo a seven-week training as they implement the book-sharing sessions with their children (Mikhulu Trust,

2020). After the seventh week of programme implementation, a post-assessment is conducted. A detailed description of the assessments is provided in the Method Chapter.

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic triggered some shifts in programme implementation, especially after the announcement of a national lockdown on March 23, 2020. Subsequently, the #LockDownBookShare campaign that combined videos, Facebook live events and infographics were launched to ensure programme continuity (Mikhulu Trust Annual, 2020). These innovations, however, had no bearing on this evaluation because they were of short-term nature and soon the programme implementation team went back to their normal programme of recruiting and training the parents physically. Moreover, the cohort of parents and children included in the evaluation was recruited after the end of the lock down.

The Programme Theory

Different scholars use different terminologies to define the programme theory, including programme theory (Bickman, 1990), theory of change (Rogers, 2014), logic model (Funnell, 2000), implementation logic (Coldwell & Maxwell, 2018) or intervention logic (Rogers, 2014). However, the distinction between programme theory and logic model is always confused (Coldwell & Maxwell, 2018).

A logic model is a diagrammatic presentation of how the intervention works (Rogers, 2008, p.30). It is a flowchart that elucidates the components of a programme from the resources required to deliver the programme to the intended results the programme aims to achieve (Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015, p. 28; Cooksy et al., 2001). The explicit and implicit assumption about the interaction of programme resources, activities, reach population and how these are expected to lead to intended immediate, intermediate, and final outcomes is what is termed programme theory (Newcomer et al., 2015, p. 60). A programme theory is important as it guide an evaluation (Cooksy et al., 2001, p. 121) and provides a plausible model of how a programme is supposed to work (Bickman, 1987, p. 16).

Given the above distinction between a logic model and programme theory, for the current study I adopted the term logic model and developed the logic model presented in Figure 1 below. Logic model is ideal for evaluating social programmes such as the one in the current study. A Logic model describes the logical linkages of a programme along the results chain (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999),

illustrates the assumptions about how the programme is envisaged to work (Wholey, 1994), and helps the evaluator to focus on vital elements of the programme, frame the evaluation questions and identify performance measures (Newcomer et al., 2015, p. 55).

Shadish (1987) divides programme theory into micro-theory, which describes the programme being evaluated, that is, describes the logic of the programme, and macro-theory, which is concerned with factors that affect social change both within and outside programmes (Bickman, 1987, p. 5; Heilman, 1989). The micro-theory was the focus of this current study because it is intended to elucidate whether the programme is being implemented as envisaged and how it is ameliorating the social problem. Programme theory can be an impact theory that elaborates the nature of change in social conditions brought about by programme action, or process theory, which depicts the intervention's organisational plan and service utilisation plan Rossi et al. (2004, p. 558). A process theory is the focus of this evaluation.

Book-sharing for Families Logic Model

At the time of initial engagement with the programme, the Book-sharing for Families Programme did not have an explicitly documented logic model. The logic model presented in Figure 1 below was constructed using two approaches: articulating programme stakeholder mental models, and deductive development. Articulating programme stakeholder mental models involves working with various stakeholders in groups and as individuals to determine their understanding of how the programme was envisaged to produce the intended results (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). To do this, I held two online meetings with Living Hope programme staff, including the Programme Manager, Programme Coordinator, and Knowledge Co-Op Executive Director. In addition, I had one online meeting with the Mikhulu Trust Executive Director and Programme Coordinator.

During these interactions, I asked several leading questions to understand how the programme was supposed to address the social problem. The programme staff shared their views of how they thought the programme would work. They articulated the nature of the problem they wanted the programme to ameliorate, the pathways on which change was expected to happen, the key groups they wanted the programme to reach, and the assumptions and risks they envisaged. From the responses from programme participants, I developed a draft if-then logic of the programme's envisaged results,

including assumptions and factors in the external environment. Follow-up questions on why they would expect one thing to lead to the other were used to draw out information on the mechanisms for change, the assumptions that need to be met about how the programme would operate, and an awareness of the external conditions and other factors that could affect the outcome. Follow-up communications were made with individual staff from Mikhulu Trust and Living Hope, and the information collected informed the drafting of the programme logic model. The process was iterative, and a draft document was shared with the programme staff for review, and their comments were incorporated into the final logic model.

Deductive development involved the review of formal and informal documentation about the problem the programme is ameliorating, the causes and consequences of the problem, and wider research literature deemed relevant to the programme. The documents reviewed included the programme proposal, progress and annual reports, and searches on the organisation's website.

The Logic Model

The programme is premised on the understanding that:

- a. "If Mikhulu Trust trains Living Hope facilitators in book sharing and the facilitator are motivated, then they will be better able to train parents in how to conduct book-sharing with their children," and:
- b. "If parents complete a seven-week book-sharing training programme with trained facilitators and they are provided with learning materials such as picture books and connected to local libraries, then they will be better able to engage in book-sharing with their children," and:
- c. "If parents and their children engage in book-sharing where children do not listen passively to a parent reading, but instead, they are supported by the parent to take the lead in an active learning process, then positive relationships between the parents and the children will be fostered (bonding) and children's interest in book-sharing will increase and:
- d. "If positive relationships between the parents and the children are fostered, and parents use evocative techniques that encourage the child to talk about pictured materials, and parents are more supportive and sensitive to the child's developing abilities (positive parenting), then

children will become more confident, active participants, and curious, and this will increase their verbal exchanges,” and:

- e. “If children become more confident, active participants and curious, then this will contribute to improved children vocabulary and subsequently language, cognition, and socioemotional development will occur, and children will learn to use books irrespective of social disadvantages, such as family poverty and a low level of parental education,” and:
- f. “If the children’s language, cognition, and socioemotional domains develop and they learn to use books, then they will ultimately become ready for school,” and finally:
- g. “The iterative process involving the interactions of the parents and the children through book-sharing improves the parenting skills of parents (Reed et al., 2009), as the parents become sensitive to the child’s needs, for example, following the child’s lead, accepting the child’s disinterest in the book and not forcing the child to play with it any longer (Fernald et al., 2017).”

The key assumptions underpinning the above logic are a) parents are willing to enrol and complete a seven-week book-sharing training; b) parents can utilise the learning material provided to them during the training to conduct book-sharing with children; c) facilitator are facilitated and motivated to conduct the trainings and monitor parents in implementing the book-sharing programme; and d) parents are more supportive and sensitive to the child’s developing abilities.

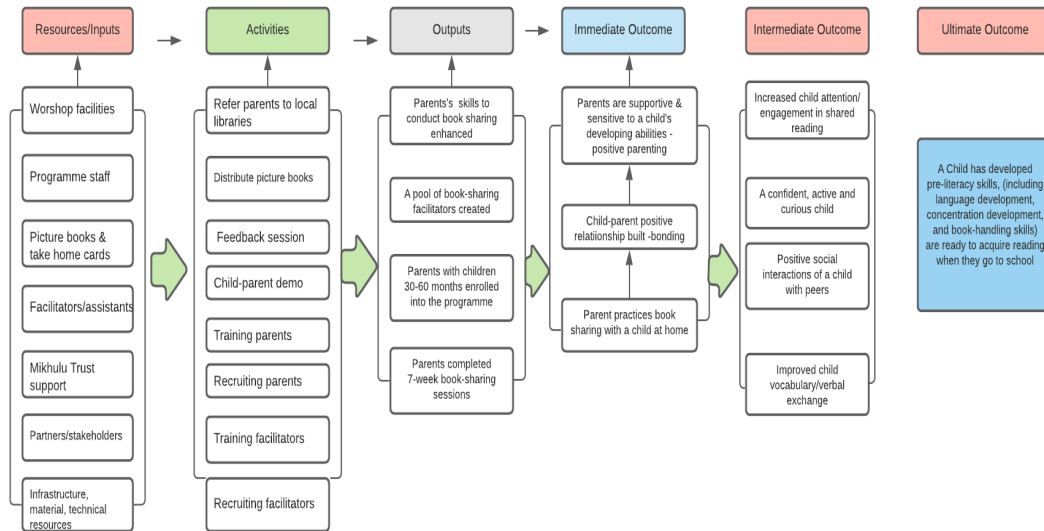
Figure 1 below provides a visual presentation of the programme logic model.

Figure 1 Visual Presentation of the Programme Logic Model

The "Book-sharing for Families" Programme

Situation:
 In Ocean View, Masiphumelele and Capricorn areas of South Africa unemployment rate ranges from 30% to 80% creating a situation where poverty thrive. Parents cannot afford taking their children to daycare centres or buying them stimulations such as toys. Thus, by the time children start schooling they exhibit undeveloped pre-literacy skills.

Programme Goal:
 To supports caregivers to build positive relationships and provide effective stimulation for their young children by equipping children with pre-literacy skills (including language development, concentration development, and book-handling skills) they need to be ready to acquire reading when they go to school



Assumptions: Parents complete the seven-week book-sharing sessions.

External Context:

1. COVID- 19 pandemic and shutdown of education institutions;
2. widespread gangsterism & violence;
3. Service delivery protests;
4. Winter/rains causing difficulties in accessing groups

“Book-sharing for Families” Logic Model

The logic model presented in Figure 1 above highlights the resources including workshop facilities, staff, and other logistics, which, when availed, would enable Living Hope to engage in different book-sharing activities. Key book-sharing activities conducted include recruitments, training, distribution of picture books and referrals of parents to local libraries. With the resources available and the activities conducted, Living Hope is expected to impact children in terms of vocal skills; parents in terms of parenting skills, and facilitators in terms of enhancing their capacities to conduct book-sharing sessions with parents. Thus, the programme is envisaged to produce various results along the results chain for children, parents, and facilitators.

Immediate outcomes

In the very short run, the programme is envisaged to bolster parenting skills. Parents are more able to conduct book-sharing sessions with children, they are more sensitive and supportive of the child’s development needs, and there is increased bonding because of the positive child-parent interactions and relationships.

Intermediate outcomes

In the short run, children will become more oriented to book-sharing activities, manifested in increased child attention, interest, and engagement. The child will become more confident, active, and curious and will interact freely with peers in a range of activities, ultimately leading to improved child verbal exchanges. The outcome of interest for the current study is the conversational turn count, an estimate of back-and-forth exchanges between the child and an adult (Ferjan et al., 2020, p. 3490) during a book-sharing session. It is a discrete pair of an adult utterance followed by a child utterance or vice versa, with no more than a five-second pause between the two (Ferjan et al., 2020, p. 3490). The Method Chapter has a detailed description of measurements.

Long-term outcomes

In the long run, the children are envisaged to develop pre-literacy skills (such as language development, increased concentration, and book-handling) and are ready to acquire reading when they go to school.

Plausibility of the logic model

It is a standard by the University of Cape Town for the dissertation for the master's in programme evaluation to conduct a plausibility assessment of the programme theory, in this case, the logic model. Besides, it is part of my evaluation approach to critically engage with the plausibility of the logic model by conducting a logic analysis through undertaking a literature review on the different components of the logic model.

A logic analysis evaluates the soundness of the theoretical and operational bases of the intervention design using available scientific knowledge (Contandriopoulos et al., 2000). Logic analysis helps the evaluator and programme stakeholders to understand the programme's strengths and weaknesses and assesses whether the programme design is robust enough to produce the intended results (Champagne et al., 2009a quoted in Brousselle & Champagne, 2011, p. 70). Conducting a logic analysis thus facilitates improvements in the programme design and finds alternatives for achieving intended outcomes (Brousselle & Champagne, 2011, p. 1).

To assess the plausibility of the assumptions underpinning the logic model for the Book-sharing for Families Programme, I conducted a literature review of published evaluation research on book-sharing interventions for children. Google Scholar search facilitated this process. The following search terms were used: infant, toddler, or pre-schooler; and book reading; book-sharing; shared reading; sharing book reading; joint reading; joint book reading; dialogic reading; storybook reading; shared book reading; dialogic shared book reading; and thematic review of book-sharing.

Adult-child book-sharing programmes are designed and implemented to achieve different learning and child development objectives, and these objectives assist in evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. For the Book-sharing for Families Programme, literature is reviewed in line with the four intended programme objectives. These objectives are to (1) foster bonding between the child and the parent; (2) foster positive parenting skills; (3) foster children's orientations in book-sharing activities; and (4) increase children's vocalisations/conversational turns.

In their study on the impact of dialogic book-sharing training on infant language and attention conducted in Khayelitsha, an informal settlement in South Africa, Vally et al., (2015) highlighted four success factors for book-sharing interventions, and these include (1) clarity of the purpose of the

intervention to intended beneficiaries, which fosters ownership and increases participation; (2) delivering the intervention with a group with few sessions, due to limited technical capacities and financial constraints, particularly in low-medium-income countries; (3) delivering the intervention by local community workers to foster ownership and scalability of the interventions; and (4) developing a robust book-sharing programme, accompanied by a user manual. The training programme involved the parent and infant attending a 90-minute session for eight consecutive weeks. Living Hope adopted some of these success factors in its programme implementation for instance, it developed an elaborate training manual that guides facilitators during the training of parents and has a robust seven-week curriculum of a 90-minute session weekly. However, Living Hope must develop and share with programme participants a factsheet and programme briefs that clearly elucidate the programme goal, objectives and expected incentives to the participating parents, as there is limited clarity on these currently. In addition, Living Hope has not adopted the approach of delivering the book-sharing sessions in groups, even when they have acknowledged the challenge of resource constraints in terms of facilitator and finances, making it difficult to expand the programme to other sites. Moreover, Living Hope still relies on recruited facilitators to conduct the training of parents instead of leveraging on local community workers, which would ensure ownership and sustainability of the programme gains.

To Dowdall et al. (2020), book-sharing interventions had a small-sized effect on both expressive language ($d=0.41$) and receptive language ($d=0.26$). The study noted that the impact of book-sharing interventions on child language was moderated by intervention dosage, with lower dosage associated with a minimal impact. Their categorisation into low and high dosage was necessarily crude (<60 minutes vs > 60 minutes of collective intervention time). Additionally, they found that many book-sharing techniques were geared to elicit a verbal response and promote child verbal participation. In line with these findings, Living Hope offers a high intervention dosage: it conducts 90-minute weekly book-sharing sessions with parents and emphasises the teaching of unique skills/competencies in each training session/week. This is likely to impact caregivers' parenting skills, children's expressive ability, attention, and orientation to shared book reading. These findings were supported by Adam and Barratt-Pugh (2020) who concluded that children should be read to frequently;

book-sharing in small group size yield greater impact than that conducted with big size or one-on-one with a child; and that there should be a positive relationship between the child and the educator.

From Adam and Barratt-Pugh's (2020) and Dowdall et al. (2020) studies, it is important to note that whereas Living Hope's intervention is of high dosage, that is, 90-minute sessions per week, many of the findings that would improve the programme's efficacy were not considered. For instance, Living Hope conducts one-on-one book-sharing sessions as opposed to small group sessions, and the sessions are conducted once a week, yet children and parents need frequent updates and revisions. Moreover, the measures that Living Hope uses to measure the quality of the educator are not robust; that is, they use an Assessment of Book-sharing Questionnaire (ABQ) tool, which is a short survey conducted with the parents immediately after the end of the seventh book-sharing session. The Naturalistic Assessment of Verbal Exchanges (NAVE) tool used only captures the child's vocalisation and conversational turns.

In examining the effects of adult-mediated book-sharing on the early language development of toddlers and pre-schoolers, Trivette et al. (2010) analysed a shared book reading characteristics on children's expressive language development. The expressive language outcome measures included spontaneous verbalisations, mean length of utterance, verbal production, and expressive vocabulary. The review highlighted nine book-sharing practices with medium effects on children's total expressive language scores (see Appendix 15). The findings from their study resonate with the assumptions that underpin the book-sharing programme of Living Hope, that is, the emphasis on following the child's interest, never saying no to a child, asking opening-ended, use of expansions, among others.

The available scientific knowledge supports the causal pathway adopted by Living Hope in implementing the book-sharing programme. Specially, the intensity of the training and the focus on children interest, positive parenting skills among others. However, the plausibility assessment of the programme theory revealed some gaps in the intervention logic. I can, therefore, conclude that the logic model presented in Figure 1 above is to a small extent, plausible. Living Hope should enrich its measurements by using the COB tool to measure the children's engagement with shared reading and expand the scope of the ABQ tool or adopt SABR tool to robustly measure the quality of the educator.

Evaluation Questions

This process and outcome evaluation investigated the nature and quality of parent practice and the interactions between parents and children during book-sharing. It further assessed how well the facilitator trained parents in book-sharing and how well parents conducted book-sharing sessions with the children. It is a formative evaluation aimed at improvement and takes place in all phases and iterative cycles of the intervention (Kröger, 1998; Nieveen & Folmer, 2013, p. 35). For the current study, this evaluation aimed to examine the effects of the book-sharing programme on children's verbal exchange and assess whether the programme was implemented in line with its design. The evaluation focused on the short-term outcome and the implementation of the book-sharing programme.

Implementation evaluation seeks to examine the activities conducted by the programme staff, the reactions of the target population to the intervention, and the why and how an intervention achieves its results, though it does not evaluate those results (Kröger, 1998). For the current study, an implementation evaluation was conducted to inform the stakeholders how well the facilitators and parents were implementing the book-sharing programme. This will inform improvements in programme implementation.

Outcome evaluation, on the other hand, tests whether and to what extent the expected results are being achieved (Kröger, 1998, p. 61). This kind of evaluation was important to assess the short-term outcomes of the book-sharing programme on children's vocalisation ability, attention, and orientation to shared reading and the effects on caregivers' parenting skills.

Short-term Outcome and Process Evaluation Questions

Outcomes Question

1. What effect does the implementation of the book-sharing programme have on children's verbal exchanges?

Process Questions

2. Do parents conduct book-sharing sessions with children in the manner consistent with programme design?

3. To what extent are the children actively engaged during the book-sharing sessions with the parents?
4. How do parents and facilitators implement the book-sharing programme?
 - a) How is the programme tailored to the intended beneficiaries' expectations?
 - b) Were the children participating in book-sharing sessions in appropriate ways?
 - c) What aspects of the programme did the beneficiaries feel worked well and contributed to the attainment of intended results or did not work well and inhibited the attainment of intended results?
 - d) Was the programme perceived to be challenging by participants?

Chapter 2: Method

A process and outcome evaluation was conducted to assess the short-term outcomes of the book-sharing programme (effect on children verbal exchanges) and also examine whether or not the programme was implemented in line with its design. A process evaluation provides an elaborate description of the intervention, assists the evaluator in checking the actual exposure of programme participants to the intervention and offers a description of the experience of such participants (Hulscher, Laurant & Grol, 2003). With process evaluation, the evaluator examines the intervention's extent, fidelity, and quality (Butterfoss, 2006, p. 324).

Therefore, for the current study, it was important to elucidate the nature and scope of the programme; the materials, human resources, and time investment required; whether the programme was implemented according to the plan; whether the target population was exposed to the intervention as envisaged and if yes, how did the population reached experience the intervention and the immediate outcomes; the challenges that experienced during the programme implementation path; and the need for changes expressed by programme participants. Additionally, Living Hope intends to scale up and replicate book-sharing interventions to other programme sites, so a process evaluation was ideal as it addresses questions of feasibility and applicability of the intervention (Hulscher et al., 2003).

A non-experimental and descriptive study was used. A descriptive study entails collecting data that describe events concerning a specific issue (Knupfer & McLellan, 1996, quoted in Hew, Kale, & Kim, 2007, p. 275). For the current study, a descriptive study was required to address the implementation questions, particularly to assess the fidelity of the programme implementation; determine whether the programme is achieving the intended results; clarify programme processes, goals, and objectives.

A non-experimental evaluation design does not involve the use of a comparison or control group; that is, they investigate only one experimental group, and data can be collected either before and after the intervention or only afterwards (Kröger, 1998, p. 62). A before and after design, without a comparison group, was used for the current study. Whereas this evaluation design is comparatively cheap and straightforward to execute, it does not provide an adequate explanation of possible link of

the intended intervention logic. Besides, this design has minimal control over extraneous factors that could influence outcomes (Kröger, 1998). Resource constraints in the form of human resources and financial made it impossible to construct the comparison group. Moreover, Living Hope had designed this programme basing on evidence from other successful book-sharing interventions implemented in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. It was therefore irrational and unethical to deny participants access to services already proved to be effective.

This section describes the approaches used to answer the four evaluation questions and the data collection and analysis methods. The method chapter is divided into four sub-sections structured along the four evaluation questions presented in Chapter 1 above: (i) the method used to assess the short-term outcomes of the programme; (ii) the method used to assess the level of children's engagement in shared reading; (iii) the methods used to assess the quality of parents in conducting book-sharing session with children; and iv) the methods used for the qualitative data generated through the interview conducted with parents and programme staff.

Method for Short-term Outcome Evaluation

Evaluation Question 1: What effect does the implementation of the book-sharing programme have on children's verbal exchanges?

A pre-test and post-test design, with no control group was used to address evaluation question 1. The same instrument was used to collect data before the programme began and again at the end of the programme. This design is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

An Illustration of a Pre-test – Post-test Evaluation Design



Participants

In analysing the short-term outcome of the programme, data were collected from a cohort of nine parents and their respective children aged 30 to 60 months who consented to participate in the

programme. The inclusion criteria included: (1) being a parent/caregiver; (2) having a child between the age of 30 to 60 months; (3) residing within Living Hope programme sites; (4) being of low socioeconomic status; and (5) willingness to attend a seven-week book-sharing training. Living Hope recruited the programme participants, and baseline assessments were conducted in January 2022. The same cohort was reassessed at the end of the programme in March 2022. Living Hope provided the list of all participants (parents and their respective children). The records included the child's name, date of birth, date of recruitment, province, and sex, among others.

At the time of recruitment, Living Hope reached 30 parents and 30 children, and these were assessed before programme implementation started. During the implementation phase, some parents and children could not be traced; therefore, at the end of the programme implementation, out of the 30 parents recruited, only nine attended and completed the book-sharing sessions, and these were assessed again. Some parents dropped out of the programme for reasons including: (1) children were at school and so could not attend the book-sharing sessions; (2) some children had not started talking and so could not participate in book-sharing sessions; and (3) some children and parents had taken a visit or migrated to different regions/countries. With these constraints, the current study had only nine participants who had completed pre-test and post-test assessments and these were used to estimate the short-term outcomes of the programme.

Data for assessing this outcome came from a variety of sources. The effect of book-sharing was evaluated using parent pre- and post-participation assessments and interviews with parents and their facilitators. The measures used are described in the sections that follow.

Measures

The Naturalistic Assessment of Verbal Exchanges (NAVE) tool, presented in Appendix 2, was used to collect data. Naturalistic observations involve a trained observer observing and recording a child during the child's daily routine (Fernald et al., 2017). Vally et al. (2015) used the Mac Arthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory (CDI) to measure the effectiveness of dialogic book-sharing. The CDI, however, largely assesses language development, requires a lot of time to complete the form and works well with literate parents (Fernald et al., 2017). The NAVE is a pre-and post-assessment

observation tool. It involved an assessment of the parents and their children before they received the first book-sharing session and immediately after they received their final book-sharing session.

Data collection procedures

Two programme facilitators were used to collect data before and after the programme. The NAVE was developed by Mikhulu Trust and was already utilised by Living Hope as part of its standard operating procedures. Living Hope facilitators had thus already been trained in using the tool through routine training and assessments conducted by Mikhulu Trust. These secondary data were therefore used. The NAVE involved a pre-test and post-test assessment of parents and children. The pre-NAVE assessment was conducted in January 2022 before parents and children received their first book-sharing session. The post-NAVE was conducted in March 2022, immediately after the parents had completed book-sharing session seven. The Programme Coordinator at Living Hope was responsible for selecting and supervising the facilitators to conduct the assessment with their designated parents and children.

To conduct the NAVE, before the start of the book-sharing session, the facilitator provided the parent with a wordless picture book and asked them to discuss the book with the child. The parents were informed beforehand that the session would be videotaped and recorded. The parent-child interactions were recorded as a voice note on WhatsApp. At the end of the programme (end of the seventh book-sharing session in March 2022), the assessment was repeated with the same instruction, the same book and the same parents and children. When conducting the NAVE with parents, the below script was followed as closely as possible, as it made it easier to compare scores:

"I want you to share this picture book with [child name]. You can take as much time or as little time as you like. If you agree, I will record the two of you on my cell phone for our records. OK?" The standard NAVE guidelines developed by Mikhulu Trust were followed; see Appendix 2.

While recruiting parents and administering the NAVE, facilitators were encouraged to find a quiet place to conduct the recording, so the audio to be recorded was clear and parents were informed beforehand about the NAVE process, and the time it would take to conduct the assessment. Parents were scheduled according to their agreed time to avoid the caregiver and the child waiting too long to

be assessed, as the child could be tired when it was their turn. Parents were reminded to bring along their young child (30-60 months of age) for the assessment and that the person who brings the child to the assessment must be the one who also attended the sessions with the child and must be available to complete the post-assessment with the child as well. Parents were also requested to provide the following information: parent name and surname, parent date of birth, parent contact and next of kin, child name and surname, and the child's age or date of birth. During these parent-child interactions, the facilitator observed and recorded the interactions.

Data processing and analysis

Following data collection, I received the completed pre- and post-NAVE audio recordings as a voice note from the Programme Coordinator. I downloaded them to a computer and coded them manually. To do the analysis, I needed all the data on the same sheet and the 'before' and 'after' values for each parent to be on the same row but in different columns. I did this on the sheet called 'All'. I then needed to remove all parents that don't have both before and after values. I did this on the sheet called 'Only matched'. With this, I reminded with only nine entries. On average, the recordings took five minutes.

I listened to each voice note and recorded the adult word count, conversational turn count, and child vocalisation count. This enabled me to work out the number of words per minute and the number of conversational turns per minute. It is the conversational turns that this evaluation was primarily interested in. The codes included a Zero (0 – denoting the parent talking), One (1 – denoting a child talking), and 01 (denoting a conversational turn). The more the number of conversational turns (CT), the better the outcome. Ferjan et al. (2020, p. 3490) defined a conversational turn as a discrete pair of an adult utterance followed by a child utterance or vice versa, with no more than a five-second pause between the two.

Preliminary statistical analysis such as frequencies and means were conducted to check for anomalous results. The numbers before and after the interventions were compared. The means for both before and after results and the difference between them was calculated. SPSS IBM 28 was used to analyse the data and tested for statistical significance of the difference using a two-tailed student paired t-test. A paired t-test was used for this study because of the need to compare the mean scores

and standard deviation of the pupils' verbal exchanges before and after enrolling in the book-sharing programme. A two-tailed test was adopted because of the need to measure the overall changes in pupils' verbal exchanges before and after the book-sharing programme. So, the null and alternative hypotheses were:

H_0 = The Mean pupils verbal exchanges before and after the book-sharing programmes are the same.

H_1 = The Mean pupils verbal exchanges before and after the book-sharing programmes are not equal.

Method for Assessing Children's Level Engagement in Book-sharing

Evaluation question 2: To what extent are the children actively engaged during the book-sharing sessions with the parents? (children's engagement)?

Engagement refers to the amount of time children spend interacting with the environment (with adults, children, or materials) in a manner that is developmentally appropriate (McWilliam et al., 1985, p. 1). A child's quality and quantity of participation in any activity will be influenced by the level of active engagement in an activity (de Kruif & McWilliam, 1999). Children who are frequently engaged in literacy interactions show increased benefit from book-sharing experiences and early literacy interventions (Justice et al., 2003; Kaderavek & Pakulski, 2007). Pre-schoolers who enjoy literacy are comparatively more likely to become fluent readers in elementary school (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1992).

Participants

Data was collected from the same cohort of parents and their respective children of 30 to 60 months, as the case was for evaluation question 1 above.

Measures

Children's orientation to book-sharing was measured using the Children's Orientation to Book reading (COB) rating scale developed by Kaderavek and Hunt (2009). The COB is an observation tool designed to capture children's overall responses to literacy events by monitoring levels of engagement, nonverbal and verbal behaviours, persistence, and their focus of attention during book reading (Kaderavek et al., 2014, p. 164). Scoring guidelines for the COB are presented in Appendix 3. In the current study, parents were asked to share a wordless picture book with a child.

The COB is a four-point global rating scale (with scores of one and two indicating overall low orientation and scores of three and four indicating high orientation) used to measure the level of preschool children's orientation to literacy during shared book reading (Kaderavek et al., 2014, p. 164).

The COB was administered to parents immediately after the completion of the seventh book-sharing session in 2022, and the observer focused on the child's behaviours during the entire book-sharing session. The COB was identified and introduced by the evaluator. It added value as it assesses the children's level of orientation during adult-child shared book reading (Kaderavek & Hunt, 2007), unlike NAVE, which focused on the programme's effects on children's verbalization. It is important to measure children's engagement in book-sharing interactions because school-age children with high engagement/literacy motivation read more than their peers who have low literacy interest (Guthrie et al., 1999 as cited in Kaderavek et al., 2014, p. 160) and have improved reading comprehension (Guthrie et al., 2004, as cited in Kaderavek et al., 2014, p. 160).

Data collection procedure

As COB was a new tool to Living Hope, a half a day training workshop was conducted, facilitated by the Programme Coordinator. A training of trainer's session preceded the workshop with the Programme Coordinator, and I provided her with all the instruments and protocols required to train the facilitators. Prior to this, I sought permission from the developer of the COB tool, who generously granted me access to COB resources, including the manual and demonstration videos. I shared these resources with the Programme Coordinator and my supervisor.

During the training, facilitators were cautioned not to modify the rating score based on external explanations for what took place during the book-sharing session (e.g., the book was a wrong choice, or the adult used poor reading behaviours). Also, one single incident could not be used to alter the observer's global impression of the child's overall engagement. The score instead reflected the child's performance over the entire book-sharing session.

Data coding and scoring

Two Living Hope trained facilitators observed the entire book-sharing session and rated the child on a COB four-rating scale. The observers focused on six behavioural characteristics of the child that is posture, facial expressions, eye gaze, distractibility, verbal or nonverbal communication, and

response to adult support. The COB scale is defined in Appendix 4. The COB scoring was completed immediately after each observation. Observers carefully reviewed the scale descriptions and made judgments based on the behavioural descriptions for each rating level.

I used a COB protocol manual to conduct a two-hour online training of Living Hope facilitators. For this study, only one child was observed and coded at a go (individual child viewing). During the entire book-sharing session, the observer/facilitator watched the child's affective involvement to gauge their overall engagement with the book-sharing task and their attention to the task. The observer wrote notes next to the scale that reflected specific behaviour or child statements that justified the rating assignment.

Data analysis

The Programme Coordinator forwarded me the completed observation forms, which I used SPSS IBM 28 to analyse. The overall COB scores for the children ranged from one to four, with subsequent mean and standard deviation. Similarly, normality was tested by calculating the skewness and kurtosis. This informed the transformation of COB score into normal curve equivalent score.

Method for Assessing the Quality of implementation

Evaluation Question 3: Do parents conduct book-sharing sessions with children in a manner consistent with programme design

Data collection tool and participants

Evaluation question three examined how well the parents conducted book-sharing sessions with their children. An Assessment of Book-sharing Questionnaire (ABQ) tool was used to collect data. The ABQ was a post-intervention observation assessment tool, and it was administered to parents immediately after the completion of the seventh book-sharing session in March 2022. The ABQ developed by the Mikhulu Trust was part of the standard operating procedure for all Living Hope book-sharing interventions. It had been tested and proved as a reliable and valid tool for measuring the quality of book-sharing with children by parents. Living Hope facilitators, trained by Mikhulu Trust, conducted the ABQ assessment where each parent was rated on each of the ten aspects listed in Appendix 1. I analysed this secondary data to answer the evaluation question above. However, most

of the data was collected by programme staff using the ABQ tool, I failed to receive the evidence for the reliability and validity of this measuring instrument.

Data analysis

SPSS IBM 28 was used to analyse data and calculate the overall rating of the nine parents in conducting the book-sharing sessions with children. Descriptive statistics were generated.

Methods for other Implementation Questions

Evaluation question 4: How do parents and facilitators implement the book-sharing programme?

In addition to the three observation measures described above, that is, NAVE, ABQ and COB, an interview schedule (see Appendices 5 and 6) was developed to obtain qualitative data from parents, facilitators, and other programme staff. The qualitative data supplemented the observational data and helped answer evaluation question four presented in Chapter 1 above. The interview schedule was not part of the evaluation proposal, but it was added to cover the shortages in the number of participants reached. In other words, I originally planned to assess 30 parents both before and after the book-sharing sessions, but only nine parents were reached.

Research design

I used process evaluation to address this question. Each process in the logic model was intended to lay the foundation for the next step in the model. This evaluation question aimed to assess whether the facilitators and parents implemented the Book-sharing for Families Programme as intended. Differences in implementation could influence outcomes. A generic qualitative inquiry framework was used in answering this evaluation question.

A generic qualitative inquiry framework describes people's experiences about the situation or an event Patton (2015). The framework is ideal for this study as it is descriptive and will help in understanding and exploring the programme participants' perspectives and views of how the programme was implemented to reach the intended beneficiaries and attain the results envisaged.

Data collection tools and participants

Data concerning programme implementation were obtained mainly from interviews conducted with the programme participants: the parents, facilitators, and the Programme Manager.

A semi-structured interview framework was developed, containing key contents and topical areas of focus. The framework was presented to and approved by the supervisor before submitting it to the ethical committee for approval. The framework was approved, and I included it as an addendum to the original proposal. Appendices 11 and 12 show the approval letters from the ethical committee. See Appendix 5 and 6 for the interview protocols used with facilitators and parents.

Online interviews via Microsoft Teams were scheduled with five parents, two facilitators, and the Programme Manager using an interview schedule. Each interview lasted for 30 minutes. Before the interviews, the Programme Manager briefed each parent and facilitator about the interviews, the time the interview would take, and the fact that the interview would be recorded, and all the participants consented to participate. The interviews were conducted in English, and the interview sessions were recorded via Microsoft Teams.

The programme logic model guided the development of the interview protocols for the facilitators and parents. The Programme Manager provided detailed information about the programme sites, how the parents and facilitators were recruited, trained, and supervised, and how the programme resources were managed. During the interview, parents were asked to describe the book-sharing situations before and after they started participating in the book-sharing programme, their relationship with the facilitators, how they used the book-sharing materials such as the take-home book card, the changes they had seen in their children after participating in the programme and how they generally felt about the programme. The facilitators were asked about the training they received, their relationships with the parents and the Programme and Site Coordinator, how they established communication with the parents, how they conducted their training sessions, how they used the book-sharing materials, and changes, if any, they wished to see in the design and implementation of the book-sharing programme.

The process of organising data, that is, coding data, finding patterns, labelling themes, and developing categories, was initiated. I began the process by manually listening to recordings and

conducting verbatim data transcription. The transcripts were later printed. I read through the prints and the notes I made during the interviews while making comments in the margins. I developed topics and files for the data. This involved looking at the data, naming and labelling it. This became the indexed copy of the interview. I then developed data codes and definitions.

I conducted the initial reading through the data to develop the coding categories and classification system. I made a repeated reading of the data before the interview transcripts were systematically indexed and coded, using coloured highlighting pens.

Data analysis

To prepare for analysis, I created an inventory of my data, including the interview notes, audio, and video recordings. The inventory helped me to assess the quality of information I had collected. I checked for the completeness of field notes and ensured that the interview transcriptions were complete. I transcribed the data collected/recordings, which gave me important insights into the collected data. I created backup copies for the field notes, transcripts, and data recording. I also saved data in multiple digital locations.

Data analysis was informed by the overall evaluation purpose/questions. I grouped together answers from different people but speaking to a common question using a cross-case analysis (Patton, 2015). A mix of analytical framework approaches was used to organise and report the data, including organising data along issues and along questions. (Patton, 2015).

A thematic Inductive content analysis, involving searching and counting recurring themes (Patton, 2015) was used to analyse data. This was intended to generate patterns and themes in the data through pattern analysis and theme analysis, respectively.

To organise and make sense of the data, I created a template that guided defining codes, hierarchical coding and parallel coding. I identified conceptual themes through template analysis, clustered them into broader groupings, and subsequently identified major themes and sub-themes across cases. I then compared the perspectives of parents and programme staff.

Ethical considerations

Because the evaluation involved collecting primary and secondary data from parents and children, the evaluator sought ethical clearance from the Faculty Ethics in Research Committee once

the proposal was approved by the Review Committee (Appendices 10, 11 and 12). Because the research involved the participation of children (data was collected through observation of children aged 30 to 60 months), the evaluator, through the Programme Coordinator, sought parental written and verbal consent at the point of data collection. Living Hope had already sought consent from the cohort of parents enrolled on the programme (see Appendices 7 and 8).

Additionally, the cover page of the data collection instruments contained a preamble detailing the purpose of the evaluation, what the information collected will be used for, and a clause of voluntary participation and the ease of withdrawing from the interview, if need arose. Furthermore, the data obtained was anonymised throughout the process, and no individualised response was included in the final report. Data obtained from the parents was stored on the evaluator's computer in a password-protected folder.

Chapter 3: Results

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the effect of the book-sharing programme on children's verbal exchange, and to assess whether the programme was implemented in line with its design. This chapter highlights the quantitative and qualitative results from data analysed to respond to the evaluation questions. The results are presented per the evaluation questions in the Method Chapter. Outcomes-related data were analysed for nine parents, and their children enrolled on the programme. Table 2 below summarises the descriptive statistics of the sample.

Table 2

Sample Descriptive Statistics

<i>Item</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	Average age		39 months	0.707
Sex	Male	4		
	Female	5		
Region	Ocean View	0		
	Masiphumelele	9		
	Capricorn	0		

Evaluation question 1: What effect does the implementation of the book-sharing programme have on children's verbal exchanges?

This question assessed the short-term outcome of the programme. Before addressing this evaluation question, I conducted some initial data analysis. The purpose was to ensure that key assumptions were met.

Table 3 below shows the group statistics: the dataset's mean, standard deviation, and the number of observations. Each variable had nine records ($n = 9$) but varying mean scores and standard deviations. It is important to note that the outcome of interest is the conversational turns per minute for the pre-test and post-test periods. As highlighted in the Method Chapter, the outcome measure involved counting the number of words the child spoke, the number of words the parent spoke, and

the conversation turns (both the child and parent speaking but with the child repeating exactly what the parent said). This permitted the computation of the words spoken, and the conversation turns per minute. Table 3 below also highlights these statistics. On average, the parents used five minutes to conduct the book-sharing sessions with the children at both pre-test and post-test stages.

Table 3

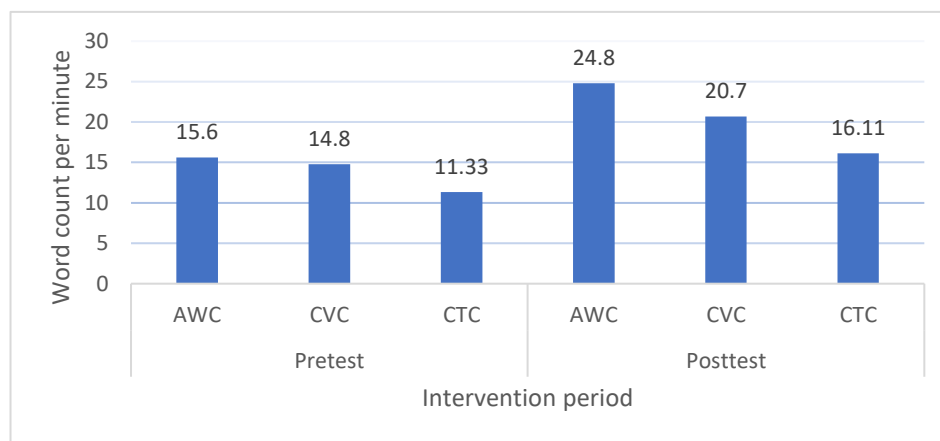
Group Statistics

<i>Test item</i>	<i>Intervention period</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Adult words spoken	Post-test	9	124.56	38.978
	Pre-test	9	77.22	31.108
Child words spoken	Post-test	9	103.44	20.354
	Pre-test	9	73.89	36.706
Conversation turns	Post-test	9	80.44	26.140
	Pre-test	9	56.44	37.021
Adult word spoken per minute	Post-test	9	24.89	7.623
	Pre-test	9	15.44	6.222
Child word spoken per minute	Post-test	9	20.67	3.969
	Pre-test	9	14.78	7.341
Conversation turns per minute	Post-test	9	16.11	5.302
	Pre-test	9	11.29	7.404

Figure 3 below illustrates that for the current study, adult word count (AWC), child vocalisation count (CVC) and conversational turn count (CTC) were higher at post-test than at pre-test, implying an improvement in the child's verbal exchange over the intervention period.

Figure 3

An Illustration of Adult Word Count, Child Vocalisation Count and Conversation Turn at Pre-test and Post-test



Based on the data I analysed for the nine parents who participated in the Book-Sharing Programme, the difference between the children's conversation turns per minute after participating in the programme (post-test) and before the programme (pre-test) is not statistically significant.

Table 3 shows that the group means are not statistically significantly different because the value in the "Sig. (2-tailed)" row is greater than 0.05. Looking at the Group Statistics Table 3 above, we can see that the children had more conversational turns per minute at post-test than at pre-test, $M = 16.11$, $SD = 5.302$ and $M = 11.29$, $SD = 7.404$, respectively.

Table 4

T-Test Comparisons of Conversational Turns Before and After Book-Sharing Interactions

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance One-Sided p	Significance Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	SE Difference	95% CI Lower Upper	
Conversation turns per minute	Equal variance assumed	0.237	0.633	1.589	16	0.066	0.132	4.822	3.036	-1.61	11.26
	Equal variance not assumed			1.589	14.5	0.067	0.134	4.822	3.036	-1.67	11.31

From Table 4 above, at 95% ($CI = -1.613, 11.257$), $t_{(16)} = 1.589$, $p = .132$, we fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference in children's conversational turns before and after the book-sharing intervention. However, the bootstrap results shown in Table 5 below indicate a $CI = -1.500, 10.249$, implying the existence of a zero in between. It is, therefore, difficult to conclude that the intervention did not cause a change in the children's conversation turns.

Table 5

Bootstrap for Independent Samples Test

		Mean Difference	Bootstrap ^a		Sig. (2- tailed)	95% <i>CI</i>	
			Bias	Std. Error		Lower	Upper
Conversation turns per minute	Equal variances assumed	4.822	0.077	2.941	0.153	-1.5	10.249
	Equal variances not assumed	4.822	0.077	2.941	0.159	-1.5	10.249

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

Table 6

Independent Samples Effect Sizes

		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% <i>CI</i>	
				Lower	Upper
Conversation turns per minute	Cohen's d	.749	.749	-.221	1.697
	Hedges' correction	6.762	.713	-.210	1.616
	Glass's delta	7.404	.651	-.342	1.609

7. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.

Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.

Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation plus a correction factor.

Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control group.

Table 6 above presents the effect size estimation using Cohen's d. However, because the sample size for this study was small ($n = 9$), the power is subsequently low. Therefore, it is not surprising that the statistical significance is not there. That is, there is a mean difference of 4.822 conversational turns between the two measurement periods (pre-test and post-test), but the difference is not statistically significant at 95% ($CI = -1.613, 11.257$), $t_{(16)} = 1.589$, $p = .132$. A Cohen's d of .749 signifies a reasonably large difference in conversational turns between pre-test and post-test. This implies that

children's verbal exchange was higher after the implementation of the book-sharing programme as manifested in the conversational turns before and after the programme.

Implementation questions

Evaluation question 2: Do parents conduct book-sharing sessions with children in the manner consistent with programme design? - Quality of the educator results

Living Hope facilitators were asked to observe and rate the parents and their respective children during the last (seventh) book-sharing session. The intention was to assess how well the parents conducted the book-sharing sessions with the children. Ten parameters were used for this assessment, with responses ranging from never, rarely, sometimes, to always. The facilitator also recorded the overall rating, which ranged from a lot of improvement is needed; some improvement is needed; good; to excellent. The findings are reported in Table 7 below.

Table 7

The ABQ - Assessment of Book-sharing Questionnaire

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Valid	Good	2	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Excellent	7	77.8	77.8	100
	Total	9	100	100	

Overall, the findings indicated that out of the nine parents observed, seven were excellent in conducting the book-sharing sessions with children, and two were good. The mean score of 3.78 ($SD = .441$) depicts that all parents excelled in conducting the book-sharing sessions, the maximum possible score being four. No parent needed improvement, as there were no scores of one or two. Similarly, on the 10 ABQ rating parameters shown in Table 8 below, parents were observed to follow the recommended book-sharing procedures introduced by Living Hope. On each parameter, two parents sometimes and seven parents, respectively, always followed the procedures. This excellent performance of parents in conducting the book-sharing sessions with children is further supported by the findings from qualitative interviews with parents and programme staff as presented in Evaluation Question 4b below. For instance, all the parents interviewed were conversant with the skills of 'never

say no to the child' and 'follow the child's interest' during the child-adult interactions. Moreover, the parent's excellent performance in conducting the book-sharing sessions further explains why children had more verbal exchanges (conversational turns) with parents at post-test compared with pre-test when assessed for the evaluation question 1 above, assessed with NAVE.

Table 8

ABQ Rating Parameters

Rate the parent on each of the following	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Total
1. Sit comfortably with the child	0	0	2	7	9
2. Follows the child's lead	0	0	2	7	9
3. Points, names, and repeats	0	0	2	7	9
4. Makes book-sharing fun for the child	0	0	2	7	9
5. Encourages the child to engage (e.g., live voice, actions, asking questions)	0	0	2	7	9
6. Talks about feelings, intentions, or perspectives	0	0	2	7	9
7. Always responds positively	0	0	2	7	9
8. Engages in sync with the child (e.g., smiling together, talking about the same thing)	0	0	2	7	9
9. Makes links to the child's life	0	0	2	7	9
10. Makes links between the different parts of the story	0	0	2	7	9

Evaluation question 3: To what extent are the children actively engaged during the book-sharing sessions with the parents? (children's engagement)

To address the third evaluation question, which focused on assessing a child's engagement in book-sharing sessions, I calculated the overall COB rating. Overall, COB scores ranged from 1 to 4 ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .441$, see Table 9), indicating that most children demonstrated high literacy orientation. This implied that the amount of time children spent interacting with the parents, children, or materials in

a manner that is developmentally appropriate during the book-sharing session was high. These excellent scores are further supported with data from qualitative interviews and ABQ analysis which revealed that children interacted with the environment (book-sharing sessions) in a manner that was developmentally appropriate and that the parents conducted book-sharing sessions with children in the manner consistent with programme design respectively. Additionally, this high level of children's engagement and attention during book-sharing sessions perhaps explains why children had more verbal exchanges at post-test than at pre-test when assessed with NAVE under evaluation question 1. However, raw scores of COB were not normally distributed (skewness = -1.620, kurtosis = .735). Acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis ranges from -1 to 1. The raw scores of COB were transformed into normal curve equivalent scores for analysis.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for COB Rating

COB Overall rating	
<i>M</i>	3.78
<i>SD</i>	0.441
<i>Skewness</i>	-1.62
<i>Kurtosis</i>	0.735
<i>Minimum</i>	3
<i>Maximum</i>	4

On average, the children's engagement in book-sharing activities was 3.78. This signifies a high level of children's attention and interest in the shared book interactions because the COB is a four-point scale, with a score of one and two indicating low engagement while the scores of three and four imply high engagement.

Qualitative questions: How do parents and facilitators implement the book-sharing programme?

This section of the Results Chapter focuses on understanding how the book-sharing programme was implemented; attempts made to meet the beneficiaries' expectations; perceived challenges of the programme; aspects of the programme that the beneficiaries thought worked or

didn't work well; and aspects of the programme that the beneficiaries believed needed improvement to allow attainment of intended results. The main implementation question was: How do parents and facilitators implement the book-sharing programme? This question had four sub questions and the results are presented per sub question. Eight in-depth interviews were conducted with programme participants (parents and programme staff) for this qualitative analysis. These were selected based on their consent and availability to be interviewed. Parents and programme facilitators who participated in the programme at baseline and end line were interviewed. In addition, the Programme Manager was also interviewed. Transcripts of programme beneficiaries and facilitators were reviewed, and there were similarities in how the programme implementation was perceived. Similar codes, themes, and patterns emerged as presented below under the respective sub-questions. The qualitative data generated from these interviews were used to explain results from other quantitative analysis including the NAVE, COB and ABQ

Evaluation Question 4a: How is the programme tailored to the intended beneficiaries' expectations?

Programme participants, mainly parents and facilitators, were asked to describe what a regular book-sharing session would entail. The purpose was to gain a deep understanding of the key skills that the facilitators emphasized during the training of parents and how the parents integrated those skills during the book-sharing sessions with children. Two sub-themes emerged as key skills/competencies emphasized during the book-sharing sessions: (1) never say no to the child and (2) follow the child's interest. These themes support the findings from the ABQ which assessed how well the parents implemented the book-sharing sessions with children.

Never say no to the child

All the parents and facilitators reported that during their book-sharing training, it was emphasized that parents and caregivers shouldn't say no to the child in child-led or caregiver-guided activities. They reported that saying no demotivates the child and inhibits their vocal development. The quote below from one of the parents highlights this crucial competence in conducting book-sharing with children.

“So, we always try to create interest so that the baby can be more curious to go in the beginning. Then you can start the book sharing in a correct way. Because if you say no to the children, most of the time, the children won't want to start with you or read with you because they think that they always do something wrong. As a mother, I must find a way to say no to the child, like if you are counting together with the child and maybe the child makes a mistake like for example 1,2,3 and if the child said one and three, you will not say no. You will just say, OK, let's count again together so that the child can see their mistake.”

Following the child's interest

During the dialogic book-sharing session, parents and facilitators concurred on the competence and skill of following the child's interest. They all agreed and reported that the child should take the lead during book-sharing sessions, that the parents or caregivers should follow the child's interests, and that the child should be the centre of the interactions. The quote below from one of the parents interviewed supports this assertion.

“Your child must be in the lead. So, if the child is not interested in the book at all, don't force the child to sit and do it with you because you're not going to get anything from it. So, if you can see you are sitting down with the child, and they are interested maybe in the balls and the soccer thing that is taking place in the picture, and you were interested in looking at the overall home situation that is taking place there, you shouldn't divert the child's interest from what they are interested in into what you are interested in. The child is leading that process, and so you follow, and where you see the child doesn't really engage much, you then stimulate that engagement by asking questions so that the child can begin to verbalise everything.”

Evaluation Question 4b: Were the children interacting with the environment (book-sharing sessions) in a manner that is developmentally appropriate?

Parents were asked to describe the changes that their children exhibited regarding attention and persistence during dialogic book-sharing sessions. This was intended to measure the progress of children's orientation/engagements with book-sharing and how the book-sharing experience made facilitators and parents feel. Parents reported the changes they observed concerning the children's

posture, facial expressions, eye gaze, distractibility, verbal/nonverbal communication, and response to adult support during book-sharing sessions. In the responses of both the facilitators and parents, two themes emerged: (1) A child's ability to communicate, and (2) I feel excited.

A child's ability to communicate

Whereas all the parents mentioned that in the initial stages of book-sharing, their children were afraid and hesitant to participate freely, most of them reported great progress in the development of verbal exchange of their children after engaging in book-sharing sessions. Regarding communication, parents reported that children could freely talk to parents and peers and responded well to adults' directives. They reported increased attention of children, reduced need for adult support and distractibility during book-sharing sessions. This finding is consistent with the findings from NAVE assessment in the evaluation question 1 where children's conversation turns increased after participating in the book-sharing sessions. It is also consistent with the findings from the COB assessment that revealed high level of children's engagement during book-sharing sessions. The quote below from one of the parents interviewed supports this finding.

"At first, my child was afraid. He was shy. That is why his face was angry. I don't want to do that, mama. But in the end, he was listening and sitting well to understand what I'm saying. Again, when I asked him to go and buy something from outside, now he's gonna go. Yet, in the beginning, he was afraid. I'm not going outside, I'm afraid, Mama. But now he's gonna go and buy something, so like it's changing a lot."

Feel excited

The response of feeling excited about the book-sharing experience emerged in both parents and facilitators. Facilitators felt excited to see parents conduct book-sharing sessions with children in accordance with the steps and competencies in which they were trained. This is explaining the excellent performance of parents on the ABQ tool that assessed how well the parents conducted the book-sharing sessions with their children. One of the facilitators was quoted saying:

"Oh, for me, I don't know if I'm lucky, but I always have the great parents ever. So, they make me feel excited. I like standing in front of other people. At first, I was very scared because I was not

really experienced in doing this facilitation. But then, because of them, the way that they treated me, the respect that they gave me, it made me more confident of what I'm doing. So, it makes my job easier. I really feel excited about the book-sharing experience with these parents.”

And:

“And so, I feel like us giving moms and parents that opportunity we are in a way helping them to put good use to their time. This makes me feel excited. It elevates my mood. It makes me happy.”

Similarly, almost all parents reported feeling excited by their children’s curiosity and developmental engagement in book-sharing sessions. The quotes below support this argument:

“I feel excited because my children know how to speak with me the parent and how to play with the other children. So, I was so happy about that day, and I like that”.

“Also, the idea of not saying no to the child made me feel so excited. It's hard to say never. So never say no to your children. You must appreciate your children.”

Evaluation Question 4c: What aspects of the programme did the beneficiaries feel worked well and contributed to the attainment of intended results or did not work well and inhibited the attainment of intended results?

What worked and did not work well is yet another theme that both the parents and facilitator mentioned in their responses. Two themes emerged concerning what worked well and facilitated the attainment of programme results, and participants felt excited, as elaborated in question 4b above. The themes were (1) engagement and (2) robust training.

Engagement

In the response of both parents and programme facilitators, engagement was highlighted as a success factor and enabler of programme implementation. Effective engagement was one aspect that facilitators wanted to see when they were conducting book-sharing training with parents. For parents, success was attributed to their continued engagement and friendly relations with the facilitators. This finding is supported by the quotes below.

“We had interactive engagements within the sessions. I don't want to sound like I'm a teacher where they must listen to what I'm saying. I had to listen to their thoughts as well. So, being a

facilitator is not like in high school where they will tell us, OK, you should do this and that and that. This engagement built good relationship between us (facilitators) and parent and motivated the parents to attend our sessions.”

“I like the way facilitators conducted the training. So, I don't want to change anything. It is very nice. Facilitators explained to us very well. If you don't understand, you're gonna ask again and they explain to you until you understood it.”

Robust training

The Book-sharing for the Family Programme had many activities targeting both the facilitators and the parents, but they aimed at achieving programme results. From the perspective of the parents and facilitators, one theme emerged that could perhaps explain the programme's success is robust training as provided by Mikhulu Trust and Living Hope facilitators and the thorough training of parents by facilitators in how to conduct the book-sharing sessions with children. The quotes below demonstrate the perceived role of robust training in enabling programme success.

“In terms of training to be honest with you, I don't think there's anything different that I would make because I feel like Mikhulu Trust has really provided us with all the relevant support they could. The facilitators know exactly what they need to do. I don't really know them because I didn't go to training, but they did. So, they know what they need to do. So, I'm happy with the way they've trained facilitators.”

“This is really my own option, I didn't have any problem with the Mikhulu Trust, the way they did give us the training because as a first-time facilitator, I got the best from the training. I was happy with the training.”

“I don't see anything that need to be changed. Mikhulu Trust trained us perfectly.”

Given these testimonies from parents and facilitators concerning the robustness of the training they received and the mutual working relation between them, it thus not a surprise that parents had excellent performance on the ABQ assessment, indicating high level of conformity to the

implementation design. Additionally this explains the high levels of children's engagement/orientation to book-sharing activities as measured by the COB under evaluation question 2 above.

Evaluation Question 4d: Was the programme perceived to be challenging by participants?

Overall, the theme of 'challenges' in implementing the book-sharing programme manifested in the responses of parents, facilitators, and the programme manager. Four themes emerged regarding the challenging nature of implementing the programme, and these are: (1) waiting time, (2) turn out, (3) incentives and (4) programme monitoring.

Waiting time

Parents highlighted long waiting times as a major challenge faced when they came for book-sharing sessions with facilitators. Facilitators conducted group training and before they could start the sessions, they had to ensure that all the parents were in the room. However, as parents did not arrive at the same time, the parents who arrived on time had to wait for some hours before the sessions started. This demotivated many parents. The quotes below illustrate this situation.

"That time for waiting is disturbing me. You call someone to come for a session say at 10 o'clock and the session starts after two hours or more. I don't like that because it interferes with my household routine and causes tension with my husband."

Turn out

In their responses, the facilitators highlight the failure of parents to turn -up for book-sharing sessions as a major challenge they faced. It was reported that in some instances, parents were invited, confirmed, and scheduled for book-sharing sessions with facilitators but did not turn up on the training day. In most cases, this paralyzed the recruitment process as the target numbers of parents could not be reached. The facilitators' frustrations in this regard are manifested in the quotes below.

"At times, you schedule the training with parents, but many don't turn-up, yet you can't proceed with the training without the parents. So, the numbers keep on fluctuating. I think maybe it's because of the venue because they complain about the long distances, they travel to come to Living Hope for the trainings."

“The only challenge, however, is that for the sessions they would say is going to start at 10:00 o'clock, but I've seen facilitators starting late maybe an hour later, which is very late and the reason for that they say is usually because the participants are not there. So, if participants are not there, they aren't able to start. So, they wait. So maybe one or two will come and then they're still waiting for the other participants.”

Incentives

When the facilitators and the programme manager were asked about some of the frequently asked questions and comments made by parents when invited to book-sharing sessions, almost all their responses were on the need to provide incentives to parents. The first question parents would ask was what Living Hope was going to give them after participating in the training and in the book-sharing programme. This challenged the facilitators and programme staff because it implied that parents were interested in material gains rather than the learning outcomes of their children. Programme staff highlighted that Living Hope is a charity organisation, and it was difficult to provide material incentives to parents to induce them to participate in the programme. The quotes below highlight this challenge.

“Oh, the common questions they're asking us is what are we going to eat there? Do you guys have vouchers for us, or do you have anything for us that we will get after the class?”

I feel like disappointed. It seems like they don't want information, they only want material things, like they're after something but not interested in knowledge.”

“It just makes me feel like people are after what they can get now, and not so much concerned about their long-term wellbeing or even their children sometimes. I also understand that it is because of the context of poverty in which many of these people that we work with are coming from. When you're unemployed, you've got nothing else going on right now.”

“It's understandable, whatever you put your time to you would love to get something out of it, especially if it could be of economic benefit to you. Unfortunately, for Living Hope we deal with more developmental related stuff which are long term.”

Programme monitoring

It was reported from the responses of the facilitators and programme manager that the routine monitoring of the programme by Mikhulu Trust enabled effective and efficient implementation of the book-sharing programme as Living Hope was held accountable by Mikhulu Trust and was required to produce periodic reports. Also, Mikhulu Trust conducted regular training of facilitators and analysed, interpreted, and prepared reports on NAVE assessments. It was reported that in the initial stages, Mikhulu Trust regarded book-sharing as a pilot initiative, and that is why they keenly monitored and supported Living Hope in its implementation. However, after the pilot phase, Mikhulu Trust withdrew the support and Living Hope has limited financial and technical capacity for conducting the analysis and reporting on NAVE. The quote below supports this assertion.

“I think programme monitoring and reporting is one of the challenges we are currently facing at Living Hope. We have the gap in technical capacity to analyse and report on the NAVE.”

Chapter 4: Discussion

This evaluation was conducted to assess parents' book-sharing practices, the level of children's orientation to book-sharing, and the programme's effect on children's verbal exchange. This study used different rating scales to measure the outcome variables. The parents' book-sharing practices were measured using the ABQ, the children's orientation to book-sharing was measured using the COB, and the short-term programme effect on children's verbal exchange was measured using the NAVE. In addition, this evaluation reported on four themes and ten sub-themes that emerged from the qualitative data. The discussion presented here is based on the findings reported in the Results Chapter. The major findings of the study are presented according to these rating scales and themes as described below.

Regarding the COB scores of the children who participated in the study, most of the children showed a high level of orientation/engagement in book-sharing ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .441$). There was very little variance in this (see the distribution of COB scores in Table 9). For purposes of interpreting these results, I have compared my findings with children's orientation to book-sharing ratings obtained in other studies. For instance, Kaderavek et al. (2014) investigated the validity of a COB used to measure the level of preschool children's orientation to literacy during shared book reading. Their study demonstrated average COB scores of 3.46 ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .89$). This implies that, on average, children in my current study performed better (they were more oriented/engaged in shared book reading) than children in these two studies, as the COB is a four-point rating scale. This, however, does not rule out the likelihood of inter-rater variance. It is possible that in the current study, the raters were more generous compared to the raters in the study by Kaderavek et al. (2014). Children in the current study are of low socioeconomic status, as the case was for children in these two studies, thus making them vulnerable and considered at risk of being left behind in academic attainment.

In contrast, however, in my current study, children's orientation to book-sharing was rated on the individual child-parent interactions, and children had a mean age of three years and three months ($SD = .707$) and were of the same ethnic and racial group. In the study by Kaderavek et al. (2014), children's literacy orientation was rated during a group teacher-led book reading, and the unit of analysis was the school, meaning 46 children were assessed in preschool classrooms. Children had a

mean age of four years, two months (SD = 4.5 months). In addition, children were multi-racial and of ethnic diversity (15 children were Caucasian (33%); 21 African American (46%); one Latino (2%); and nine multiracial, Asian, Native American, or other (19%)). This characterisation might have pooled the mean COB scores for their study.

Interesting to note is the study by Kaderavek and Pakulski (2007), in which they explored the literacy orientation of preschool children with hearing impairment. The children demonstrated a higher mean level of orientation to shared book reading COB ($M = 3.6$). These children were of the same socioeconomic status as the children in my study. However, the good performance can be explained by two factors: (1) children had more than one opportunity to explore and interact with a book before orientation was assessed, and (2) the use of manipulative books as opposed to narrative or picture books during the interactions stimulated children's interest or engagement. These two factors combined fostered children's interest in book reading, increased their attention level and roused verbal and non-verbal communication, all of which supported higher ratings on the COB scale.

In addition, the incorporation of play and books with manipulative features (e.g., texture, etc.) to shared book reading was a precursor to enhanced children's engagement leading to more orientation and interest in the parent-guided activities. This further implies that even where children have no learning complications, as in my current study, children's engagement would be higher if the intervention included more interactive activities that interest the children, in addition to plain wordless picture books. This is like the findings from the NAVE assessments for this current study that involved the use of wordless/picture books. Shinsky (2016) conducted a study to test how a lift-the-flap book affected two-year-olds' word learning. Half of the children were given a commercial book with manipulable flaps, and the other half saw the same book with the flaps sealed shut. Findings of this study revealed that whereas manipulative books encourage children's interactions during shared reading, they, however, hinder learning. The NAVE revealed that the number of words that the children spoke, and the conversational turns was higher at the post-test than at the pre-test, indicating that the use of picture books attracted the children's orientation to shared reading and aroused their verbal exchange.

The existing literature highlights that children's orientation to book-sharing has a predictive relationship with other key areas of the child's literacy development. For instance, Dobbs-Oates et al. (2011), in their study on effective behaviour management in preschool classrooms and children's orientation to shared book reading, found a significant interaction between children's task orientation in predicting children's language development. This implies that children's orientation to shared book reading predicted emergent literacy and was associated with the most optimal language outcomes. These findings support the findings of the current study, where the NAVE scores in the form of adult work count (AWC), child vocalisation count (CVC), and conversational turn count (CTC) were higher at post-test than at pre-test (see Figure 3 below).

In addition, in the study by Lepola et al. (2020), children's narrative picture book comprehension was assessed, and children's task orientation was evaluated at age five. The results indicated that children's orientation to wordless picture books was positive and statistically a significant predictor of the growth of picture book comprehension over and above the initial level of narrative picture book comprehension. Unlike the current study where the COB rating scale was used, in their study, preschool teachers were asked to evaluate the behaviour, attention, and emotional expressions of each participating child in their classes and five items reflecting a child's orientation to shared picture book interactions were used. These were (1) the child can concentrate on play-like tasks, (2) the child shows a desire to do more challenging things, (3) the child wants to continue the tasks, (4) the child thinks about alternatives and plans for what they do, and (5) the child can continue with the activity even when there are distractions from the external environment. This scale, like the COB rating scale, has been shown to measure children's orientation to child-adult shared activities, including shared book reading.

From the analysis of Lepola et al. (2020) study above, it is evident that the COB alone may be too narrow to assess children's interest and orientation to child-adult book-sharing interactions. The existing literature revealed that besides the COB rating scale, other measures of children's orientation to shared book reading exist, for instance, caregiver and parent self-reported ratings (Kaderavek et al., 2014). These can be used concurrently with the COB rating scale. The existing literature further suggested that children's orientation is a positive significant predictor of other learning outcomes. This

implies that children who are highly oriented to shared book reading interactions are likely to exhibit both receptive and expressive skills.

Regarding the results from NAVE, the children who participated in the current study had more conversational turns after being exposed to book-sharing sessions compared to the period before. This then implied that in the period before the parents were trained in conducting book-sharing sessions with their children, parents dominated the discussions (parent-lead interactions) and children were more passive. Subsequently, the number of words said by parents was more than the words said by the child per minute. However, the results after the book-sharing intervention demonstrate that the children spoke more words per minute than the parents (children-led interactions). Comparing the number of conversational turns per minute (the outcome of interest of this study) both before and after the intervention, we get $M = 16.11$, $SD = 5.302$ and $M = 11.3$, $SD = 7.404$, respectively. This implies that children performed better after their parents had been exposed to book-sharing sessions, and there were more verbal exchanges between the child and the parent. Also, the mean child word utterance (child vocalisation count) was higher in the post-test compared to the pre-test period. This suggests that engaging in shared book reading enhances the children's vocalisation and ultimately improves their ability to verbally engage in a conversation with an adult. This argument further reinforces the discussions presented in the preceding paragraphs, where it was highlighted, that shared book reading between an adult and the child fosters the child's orientation to shared tasks, arouses the child's interest and attention to the shared activities, and ultimately impacts on the child's development domains such as language development.

Ferjan et al. (2020, p. 3490) defined a conversational turn (CT) as a discrete pair of an adult utterance followed by a child utterance or vice versa, with no more than a five-second pause between the two. The more the number of CTs, the better the outcome (more CTs signify improved verbal exchange resulting from child-adult book-sharing interactions).

In their study on the impact of dialogic book-sharing training on infant language and attention, Vally et al. (2015) found a significant increase in the number of words that the infant whose parents participated in book-sharing intervention could understand and could vocalise compared to those in the control group. Similarly, Murray et al. (2016) demonstrated that training in book-sharing shows

promise for improving infant socioemotional outcomes, mediated by improvements in carer–infant interactions. Moreover, in the study by Ferjan et al. (2020), parents who participated in the book-sharing intervention were engaged with their children in more conversational turns compared to parents who did not receive the intervention. Their children, in turn, increased their production of speech-related vocalisations significantly. The study further revealed that the growth in conversational turns positively correlated with the growth in children, implying that the parent and child language behaviours coevolved.

Therefore, findings from previous studies conducted on the impact of shared book reading were comparable to the findings of the current study, where children displayed more conversational turns after their parents had been exposed to shared book reading tasks. Their findings, however, showed a statistically significant difference in the conversation turn count before and after the book-sharing intervention. The lack of significance in the current study could be attributed to a small sample of only nine children. For their studies, the sample size ($n > 30$) could allow detection of the effect size. Besides, unlike the current study, their research design included a control group, thus enabling them to attribute the detected results to the intervention.

The second major finding of this study, therefore, was that the difference in children's conversational turns per minute after the book-sharing intervention and before the intervention is not statistically significant. The lack of statistical significance of the results could partly be attributed to the small sample's low power. Thus, I could not conclude with 95% certainty that the difference between the children's conversational turns at pre-test and post-test was a true difference. Table 9 presented above shows the estimation of the programme effect. The book-sharing programme had a medium effect size, evidenced by Cohen's d of .749. From Cohen's (1988) rules of thumb on magnitudes of effect sizes, $d = 0.2$ (small effect), $d = 0.5$ (medium effect), and $d = 0.8$ (large effect). However, with a small sample size for this current study ($n = 9$), the power was subsequently low. This could be the reason why the observed mean difference of 4.822 in conversational turns at pre-test and post-test failed to approach statistical significance. That is, at 95% (CI = -1.613, 11.257), $t(16) = 1.589$, $p = .132$.

Moreover, in their study on the effects of parent-mediated joint book reading on the early language development of toddlers and pre-schoolers, Trivette et al. (2010) found comparable effect sizes that were all statistically significant and ranged from small to medium for all outcomes of interest. Similarly, Vally (2014) on the impact of dialogic book-sharing training on infant language and attention found a significant benefit of training (mean ranks of 46.83 vs 35.01 for the intervention and control groups, respectively, $p < .05$, and more important, a medium effect size of Cohen's $d = .5$). It is, however, observed that the Book-sharing for the Families Programme had a large effect size of Cohen's $d = .749$ unlike the findings from other shared reading interventions that had small and medium effect sizes.

The proportion of children's verbal exchange increased from baseline to post-training though not significantly: $t(16) = 1.589$, $p = .132$. Thus, the book-sharing training had clear benefit to mothers in that, compared to the period before and after the interventions, the results were not statistically significant. However, to fully estimate the programme effect, a larger study including more children with a range of socioeconomic statuses is needed.

The third finding indicated that overall, parents were excellent in conducting book-sharing sessions with children, as manifested from the analysis of the ABQ. This finding implied that parents always followed the proper procedures for conducting book-sharing sessions with children. Parents sat comfortably with the child; followed the child's lead; pointed, named, and repeated aspects to the child; made book-sharing fun for the child; encouraged the child to engage; talked about feelings, intentions, or perspectives; responded positively to the child; engaged in sync with the child; made links to the child's life; and made links between the different parts of the story. This was further supported by data analysed from the qualitative interviews.

Qualitative inquiry studies, documents, analyses, and interprets how human beings construct and attach meanings to their experiences (Patton, 2015). In-depth, open-ended interviews were conducted with parents and programme staff. Open-ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Patton, 2015). A significant finding of the evaluation of the programme implementation indicates that the programme was implemented with maximum quality. When the parents and facilitators were asked

about the key skills that were emphasised during the routine book-sharing and training sessions, two themes emerged: (1) never say no to the child and (2) following the child's interest, both of which are in line with findings from the analysis of the ABQ tool.

Never say no to the child

During their training and inductions, the programme facilitators and parents reported that they were sensitised never to say no to the child, as doing so would discourage the children, making them lose confidence. According to researchers Trivette et al. (2010); Fung, Chow, & McBride-Chang, (2005); and Dowdall et al. (2020), the parent should praise what the child says during shared reading interactions, using praises or comments such as "That's right." Both general praise, for example, "good job!" and specific praise, for example, "good talking!", "you did such a good job of naming the animals!" are encouraging to the child (Reed et al., 2009, p. 8; Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003, p. 171-173). Thus, this finding strongly suggests that the parents were acting in a manner consistent with the literature.

Following the child's interest

Following the child's interest also featured in participants' responses regarding the key skills emphasised during the book-sharing sessions and induction. This required an adult during the book-sharing session to let the child pick the book or "read" the pages the child wanted to read. The existing literature supports this assertion. For example, Trivette et al. (2010) found that asking the child open-ended questions and following the child's interests while interacting with books encouraged a child's participation in the shared reading activities. Similarly, Zevenbergen and Whitehurst (2003) highlighted that a child is more likely to enjoy reading with adults if the adults are sensitive and responsive to their interests. In this regard, they elaborated that during shared book reading, it is not important for the adult to read all the words in the book or to talk about every picture. If a child begins to talk about a part of a story or a picture on the page, the parent or caregiver should follow their interest and encourage the children to talk more (Zevenbergen & Whitehurst, 2003).

In addition, when the participants were asked about what had worked well regarding the programme implementation, they all mentioned the robustness of the training and engagement of programme participants. The parents attributed the success to the thorough training provided to them

by the facilitators and that the rapport that the facilitators built with the parents kept them engaged at all stages and enabled them to make consultations as the need arose. Children were also highly engaged due to the dialogic nature of book-sharing activities. The facilitators applauded the training provided by the Mikhulu Trust, which inducted the facilitators into book-sharing and produced an implementation manual containing a step-by-step guide and the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of the book-sharing programme. This enabled the facilitator and parents to implement the programme according to design.

The previous studies on shared book reading concur that a sound training programme for facilitators and parents is needed for the success of book-sharing interventions and to ensure that these interventions are implemented according to the plan. For instance, Rossi et al. (2004) highlight the need for adequately training parents and facilitators before implementation commences as this ensures implementation fidelity which is key to programme success. Additionally, Fung et al. (2005) attributed the success of the shared book reading intervention on deaf and hard-of-hearing children to high-quality parent-child interactions/engagements and to the fact that parents had received training in the book-sharing skills before the actual intervention and so they knew about the importance of the relaxing atmosphere and the interactive nature.

The parents and facilitators were also asked about the challenges they faced in implementing the book-sharing programme. In their responses, the participants reported long waiting times by parents before book-sharing sessions began, failure of some parents to turn out for book-sharing sessions, continuous demand by parents for incentives in the form of payment vouchers before they could participate in the programme, and the absence of programme monitoring mechanisms. The challenge of the absence of a monitoring mechanism emerged from the absence of financial and technical capacity on the side of Living Hope to conduct the programme monitoring. This particularly occurred because Mikhulu Trust withdrew the support they initially provided to monitor, analyse, and report the data collected. The book-sharing programme performed well because Living Hope used to have the support of Mikhulu Trust but moving forward, it will be hard to replicate the successful implementation of the programme without Mikhulu Trust. To sustain the programme gains, Mikhulu Trust should build the technical capacity of Living Hope to engage in programme monitoring, data collection, analysis, and reporting.

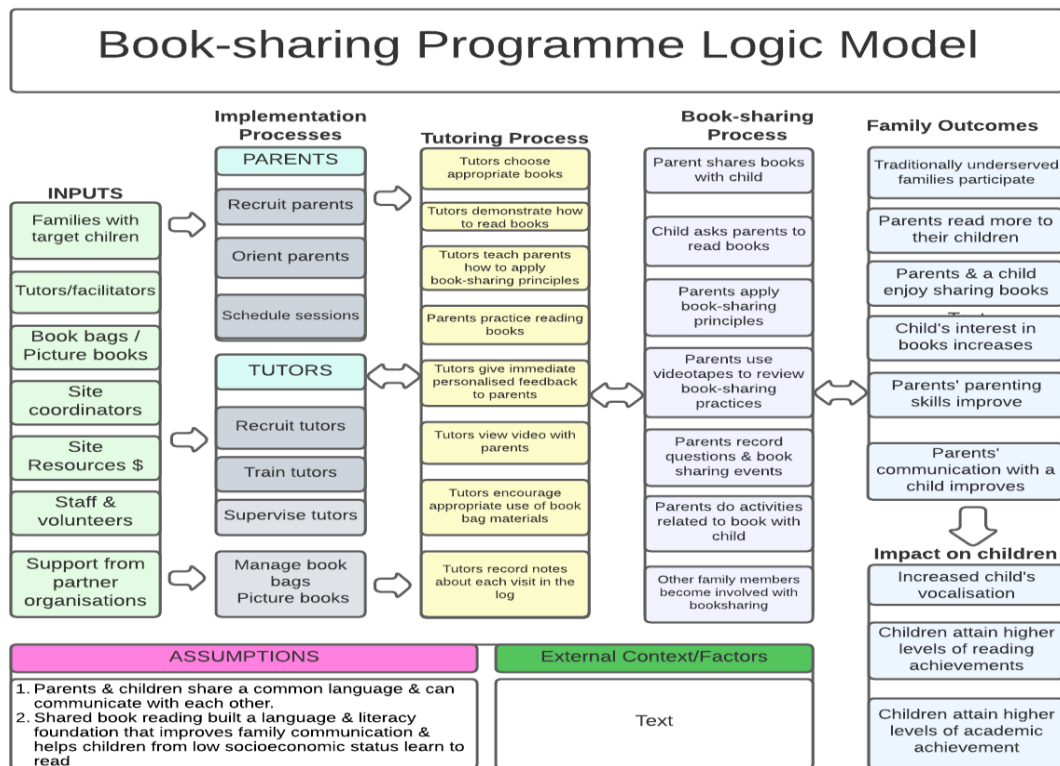
Recommendations for Book-sharing for Families Programme.

The purpose of this evaluation was to inform the improvement of the Book-sharing for the Families Programme. The recommendations below are made based on the findings from this evaluation and evidence from the evaluation of similar programmes.

1. The literature suggests that incorporating play into the book-sharing experience will encourage even more engagement and interest. Literature has shown that book-sharing interventions that added interactive components or play had more significant effects than those without. The Book-sharing for the Families Programme currently does not have any interactive elements or play. Findings highlighted that robust training of facilitators and parents in conducting book-sharing sessions with children. Whereas parents come with their children during the training and there is a demonstration session after the training, play and interactive elements are not incorporated in the trainings. It thus a recommendation of this evaluation for Living Hope to select picture books that have manipulatives such as flaps and textures that keep the child engaged.
2. The plausibility assessment of the programme logic model revealed several gaps in the intervention logic, including the omission of key assumptions and success factors, and a systematic link between long term, intermediate and short-term outcomes. A revised logic model below is therefore recommended for Living Hope to guide the implementation review, and the design of other related book-sharing programmes. The logic model should be regularly reviewed and updated to remain relevant to the changing programme context.

Figure 4

Living Hope Book-sharing Programme Revised Logic Model



Note: Living Hope Book-sharing Programme Revised Logic Model. This Logic Model has been revised and updated using the Logic Model from Shared Reading Project: Evaluating Implementation Processes and Family Outcomes. Sharing Results (p. 11), by Delk and Weidekamp (2001), retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED453519>.

- Evidence from the existing literature pointed out some success factors for the implementation of dialogic book-sharing programmes including delivering the programme in the group settings rather than individual parent-child interactions. Moreover, findings from the interview with parents, facilitators and programme staff highlighted some implementation challenges. It is therefore a recommendation of this evaluation that Living Hope should adjust the programme implementation modality by exploring new options. For instance:

- The delivery of book-sharing sessions with parents should be conducted by local community workers. Living Hope should mobilise and train local community

workers on how to conduct the book-sharing training with the parents. The use of local community workers will ensure community ownership of the programme, consistency of programme facilitators, save Living Hope the associated costs of recruiting distance facilitators, and ensure scalability of the programme.

- b) The intervention should be delivered in a group format with relatively few sessions. This may require the facilitators to reach a group of parents or caregivers and assess them as a group, instead of assessing one parent and a child at a go. This is because of limited technical capacities and financial constraints. Available evidence has revealed that, on average, a skilled facilitator can observe three to five children/parents at a go using the NAVE or COB rating scales.
- c) Kindergartens and child daycare centres should be targeted. In this case, caregivers at these centres should be trained so that they can conduct book-sharing interventions with the children. This will ensure that all target children are reached and reduce the risk of parents not turning out for book-sharing sessions. This was highlighted as one of the challenges faced by the facilitators and Living Hope
- d) Alternatively, owing to the challenge of the failure of parents to turn out for book-sharing interventions and the long waiting hours for those who turn out on time, Living Hope should explore the possibility of having mobile facilitators to reach out to parents in their respective homes. Instead of inviting all the parents to come to one central place for induction into book-sharing experiences, the trained facilitators should be the ones to reach out to targeted parents. This will reduce the transaction costs and the rate of absenteeism, allow facilitators to monitor book-sharing practices in the respective parents' homes and minimize the possibility of losing participants with improved follow-up.

Limitation

The limited sample size inevitably reduced the power of the statistical tests that were used. Perhaps, it is possible that there would be statistically significant differences in children's verbal

exchanges that could not be detected for the same reasons. To overcome this limitation, it would be necessary to expand the sample size and programme implementation sites in future studies.

Another limitation of this study is that my research design did not allow for attribution of programme effect because of the absence of a control group. However, previous evaluations conducted on the impact of shared-book reading contained control groups and already proved the effectiveness of book-sharing interventions.

An additional difficulty was my inability to visit the programme sites to supervise the collection of or to collect data personally. This, in part, was due to COVID-19 and the subsequent travel bans. Therefore, the data used for this study were collected in the form of recorded voice notes. Moreover, the quality of the data generated through online interviews was compromised by poor internet connectivity and the failure of programme participants to show-up. Except for the interviews, most of the data was collected by the programme staff using tools developed by the programme. I failed to retrieve evidence from the programme staff evidence for the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments. Inter-rater reliability scores were not shared by the programme staff, hence a possible source of bias in measurement.

It was also a limitation that the study was conducted as a one-off activity and covered a short evaluation time (seven weeks). It is important to note that the experiences and perceptions of study participants are never static; they vary with time, and this at times warrants changes in programme design. A longitudinal evaluation would be required to capture changes in these experiences and perceptions over time.

Conclusions

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the short-term outcomes of the Book-sharing for Families Programme and the extent to which the programme was implemented with sufficient quality. The evaluation found that the programme does not have a statistically significant impact on children's verbal exchange. This, however, does not mean that the programme did not have any positive effects on the participants. The book-sharing interactions deepened children's engagement/orientation to shared reading, which according to the literature reviewed impacts other child's development domains, including language and vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, the evaluation confirms the

evidence provided by previous studies on the impact of book-sharing interventions on children's communicative abilities. Prior research focused on studying children over three years old and their interaction with their parents on shared book tasks. Given the ease with which the dialogic reading technique can be learned and the fact that it is inexpensive, as the previous studies have shown, educators, caregivers and parents might consider using this technique to facilitate positive learning in children further.

The failure to detect the programme impact was partly due to the small sample size for this study. Overall, the programme was implemented with sufficient quality in line with its logic model, and the existing literature supported this. In understanding the lack of impact, Living Hope should consider expanding the programme to multiple sites, expanding the sample size of parents and children, and incorporating interactive activities such as play in programme implementation.

Contribution to knowledge

Being the first evaluation of the Book-sharing for the Family Programme, Living Hope will use the findings of this study to improve programme design and implementation and facilitate organisational learning. Particularly, this study has developed and documented a book-sharing logic model and suggested a revised logic model to guide Living Hope in developing and evaluating similar programmes. Additionally, the study has introduced a new tool that is, COB, which Living Hope has not used before. This will supplement the existing tools such as the ABQ and NAVE and assist in examining the level of children's orientation during book-sharing experiences.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The ABQ - Assessment of Book-sharing Questionnaire

Caregiver:	
Relationship to child:	
Organisation:	
Facilitator:	
Date:	

Rate the parent on each of the following	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Always (4)
1. Sit comfortably with the child				
2. Follows the child's lead				
3. Points, names, and repeats				
4. Makes book-sharing fun for the child				
5. Encourages the child to engage (e.g. live voice, actions, asking questions)				
6. Talks about feelings, intentions, or perspectives				
7. Always responds positively				
8. Engages in sync with the child (e.g. smiling together, talking about the same thing)				
9. Makes links to the child's life				
10. Makes links between the different parts				

of the story				
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Overall Rating:

A lot of improvement needed (mostly 1s and 2s)	Some improvement needed (mostly 2s and 3s)	Good (Mostly 3s)	Excellent (mostly 3s and 4s)
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Comments:

Appendix 2: About the NAVE

The NAVE is an assessment of the child's language ability. This is a pre- and post-assessment, and requires action from your facilitators before they receive their first book sharing session, and immediately after they received their final book sharing session

a) How to conduct the NAVE:

- Before the start of session 1, provide the parent with a book without any words (Little Helpers is probably best) and ask them to discuss the book with their child (see script below)
- Explain to the parent that you will record the audio
- Record this interaction as a voice note on WhatsApp
- Send this voice note to Mikhulu Trust for analysis
- After the programme, you can do this again with the same instruction and the same book.

b) Script for doing NAVE

When conducting the NAVE with parents, it is important to follow this script as closely as possible, as it makes it easier to compare scores:

"I want you to share this picture book with [child name]. You can take as much time or as little time as you like. If you are in agreement, I will record the two of you on my cell phone, for our records. OK?"

c) What will we do with the recordings?

We will listen to each voice note, and record (i) the length of the interaction, (ii) the number of words said by the child, (iii) the number of words said by the parent, and (iv) the number of conversational turns. We will then compare the pre- and post-, and this should give us a useful measure of the intervention effect.

d) Role of facilitators:

The facilitators will guide steps to scheduling a parent and child for the NAVE assessment. The NAVE assessment will be scheduled either on a separate day, before the parents receive their first session of book sharing or scheduled one hour before parents receive their first session of the

book-sharing. According to Mikhulu Trust, the first pilot conducted showed that it is possible for 8-10 parents to be assessed in an hour with a NAVE. Each parent will be observed and assessed during the first five minutes of book sharing with a child.

The standard NAVE guidelines developed by Mikhulu Trust will be followed (Mikhulu Trust, 2020). Accordingly, while recruiting parents and administering the NAVE facilitators will find a quiet place to conduct the recording so the audio to be recorded is clear and parents will be informed beforehand about the process of the NAVE and the time it will take to conduct the assessment; parents will be scheduled according to their agreed time to avoid the caregiver and the child from waiting too long to be assessed, as the child might be tired when it's their turn.; parents will be reminded to bring along their young child age (1-5) for the assessment, and that the person who brings the child age (1-5) to the assessment, must be the one who also attends the sessions with the child and must be available to complete the post assessment with the child age (1-5) as well; and parents will be requested to provide the following information:

- parent name and surname.
- parent date of birth.
- parent contact and next of kin.
- child age (1-5) name and surname.
- child age (1-5) date of birth.

Appendix 3: Child Orientation Coding Sheet

Child Orientation Coding Sheet

Rate each child after viewing their book reading.

Property of Dr. Joan Kaderavek

DO NOT USE WITHOUT PERMISSION

Construct Comments	Score			
<p>High Vs. Low Orientation: Engagement Persistence</p> <p>Child Number: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Posture</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Facial Expression</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Eye Gaze</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Distractibility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal/Nonverbal Communication</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Response to Adult Support</p>	1	2	3	4
	Low	Mid	Mid	High

Appendix 4: Rating Guidelines for the COB Scale

Behaviour associate with	COB Rating			
	Rating of 1	Rating of 2	Rating of 3	Rating of 4
Overall impression	The child is clearly not engaged during the book interaction	Overall impression is that the child is not very interested in book interaction	The child is generally engaged with occasional moments of lower engagement	The child is interested in the book reading throughout the reading session with minimal/no display of low orientation
Persistence	The child is engaged less than 30% of the book	The child is engaged during 30–50% of the book interaction	The child is engaged during 50–70% of the book interaction	The child is engaged 70% of the book interaction
Posture	A lack of forward leaning posture (i.e., away from the book or reader); child may position himself/herself at the periphery of the group of	Intermittent forward leaning posture: child may initially place himself/herself in good position to participate but moves towards the periphery of the group as the session continues	Intermittent forward leaning posture but demonstrates engaged posture for most of the book reading session	A consistent forward leaning posture. Child is likely to place himself/herself in a good position to participate in the book reading and may move closer to the teacher so he/she can see the book more clearly

children

Facial expressions	Child's facial expression is likely to be nonrelated to the story	Intermittent/rare/brief affective facial responses tied to the story	Demonstrates positive facial affect tied to story sometimes/often during the book reading session	Demonstrates frequent and positive facial affect tied to story
Eye gaze	Child may look blankly around the room, looking at other children or preoccupied visually with a toy or other object. Child does not look at the book	Intermittent attentive eye gaze. Child may be interested in discussion about the illustrations but look away or appear uninterested in discussions about text or print or book-related concepts	Eye gaze is focused on reader and text much of the time (over 50% of the book reading session); attends to story as well as illustrations	Eye gaze is focused on reader and text 70% of the story. Child may be observed moving or adjusting posture to maintain eye gaze with book
Distractibility	Child is fidgeting, rocking or moving during	Intermittent distractibility during the book reading session; often	Occasional distractibility during the book reading session	If there are major distractions in the book reading the child is minimally

the reading session; easily distracted by other events in the classroom; fidgeting, rocking, or moving throughout the story. Following distractions, child does not easily re-engage with the book reading. but child is engaged for most of the book reading. Following distractions, child may show low orientation but will re-engage with the book reading. distracted and easily transitions back to the story reading session

Verbal communication	The child does not communicate verbally in response to storybook reading	The child minimally verbally responds. Note: <i>The lack of verbal responsiveness in and of itself is not to be seen as a deficit and should not (by itself) lower the child's engagement score</i>	The child may or may not respond verbally but is generally attentive to the verbal interactions of others	The child may volunteer relevant information and thoughts during the book reading; he or she is attentive to the verbal interaction of others. Note: <i>A lack of verbal interaction</i>
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Response to adult support	Adults may provide support (e.g., the teaching assistant puts the child in his/her lap, the teacher moves the child closer and keeps a hand on his or her shoulder) but	When the adult gives redirection (with moderate levels of support) the child is re-engaged. Engagement may be reduced when support is discontinued (e.g., when adult is not physically close)	May require mild levels of adult support (e.g., a specific question directed to him/her; occasional physical prompts) to stay engaged throughout the book reading.	Minimal/no adult support is required
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Notes: Children’s Orientation to Book Reading (COB). Child is assigned one overall rating (1, 2, 3 or 4); specific behavioural descriptions (eye gaze, posture, etc.) are provided to guide rater in establishing the child’s overall global literacy orientation rating. The rater should assign the rating that best captures the child’s overall orientation during the entire book reading session.



Appendix 5: Interview Guide for Parents

Introduction:

This interview is being conducted as part of my study for a Master of Philosophy in Programme Evaluation at the University of Cape Town. The information obtained from you will be used only for the purposes of completing my study and I will not disclose your name anywhere. You have been given a consent form to sign, which indicates your consent to this interview. The interview will take around 30 minutes and it will be recorded. Is this okay with you?

I appreciate your willingness to share your story. Every story is unique, and I have heard all kinds of things. There is no right or wrong answer to these kinds of questions. What matters is that it is your story.

Background:

Thank you for accepting to participate in this interview. Now, with that introduction about the reasons why I am collecting this information from you and how I will use the information without mentioning your name, I would like to get some information from you concerning the number of children you have currently enrolled on book-sharing programme, their names, age, and the reasons why you chose to enrol on the book-sharing programme. Is this okay with you?

- 1) Please can you tell me more about the number of children that you have currently enrolled on the book-sharing programme.

Probe:

- How many children have you currently enrolled on the book-sharing programme?
- Please the name(s) of the child(ren)

- How old are these children (age and/or date of birth)?
- 2) Thank you for that useful information. Okay, now, I would like to find out the reasons why you decided to enrol your child(ren) on the book-sharing programme. Why did you choose to enrol your child(ren) on the book-sharing programme?

How parents use the picture books at home:

You have been describing how you got into the book-sharing programme. Now the next set of questions is about how you carried out the book-sharing sessions with the child(ren) and what you experienced in the programme. **Is that okay with you?**

- 3) “Suppose I was with you when you have a book sharing session with **(child’s name)**. What happens in the first 5 minutes or so?

Probe: It would be helpful to hear more about,

- What would you be doing?
 - What would the child(ren) be doing?
 - What are those first 5 minutes like?”
- 4) What would you like to see happen as a result of the book-sharing experience with your child?
- 5) How does the book-sharing experience make you feel?
- 6) What does **(child’s name)** do when you say you are going to do book-sharing?
- 7) What kinds of things does **[child’s name]** say when you are sharing books with them?
- 8) How does this experience make you feel?

Benefits, challenges, and areas of improvement:

I have been hearing a lot of positive comments about the book-sharing programme. So, you can be honest with me.

9) For the time you have had your child(ren) enrolled on the book-sharing programme, what would you say are the benefits of this programme to the child(ren) and/ or parent?

10) What changes if any, have you noticed in your child from the time you joined the book-sharing programme:

Probe: It would be helpful to hear more about,

- What changes if any, have you noticed in the way the child(ren) sits during the book-sharing sessions? (posture)
- What changes if any, have you noticed in the way the child(ren) looks (eyes) during the book-sharing sessions? (Eye gaze)
- What changes if any, have you noticed in the child(ren)'s facial expressions? Facial expression
- What changes if any, have you noticed in the way the child(ren) gets distracted during book-sharing sessions? (destructibility)
- What changes if any, have you noticed in the way the child(ren) is able to communicate both verbally and non-verbally during the book-sharing sessions? (Verbal or non-verbal communication)
- What changes if any, have you noticed in the way the child(ren) can participate in the book-sharing session without calling for his attention all the time or become attentive after a parent called him/her? (Response to adult support)

That is very helpful. You really explained that well. Thank you. I can see now why the book-sharing programme was important to you. Let me now turn to your personal likes and dislikes about the book-sharing programme.

11) What are some of the things that you have really liked about the book-sharing programme in general?

12) What have you really liked about the ways the facilitators conducted the book-sharing sessions

with you?

13) What about dislikes? What are some of the things you don't like so much about the book-sharing programme in general?

14) What are some of the things you don't like so much about the way the facilitators conducted the book-sharing sessions with you?

Thank you, you have given me a lot of useful information about your experience in the book-sharing programme, strengths, and weaknesses you have observed, and some of the things you have liked and haven't liked so much. Okay, now I would like to ask you about your recommendations for improving the implementation of the book-sharing programme.

15) If you had the opportunity to change things about the implementation and the design on book-sharing programme, what would you make different?



Appendix 6: Interview Guide for Facilitators and Programme Manager

Introduction:

This interview is being conducted as part of my study for a Master of Philosophy in Programme Evaluation at the University of Cape Town. The information obtained from you will be used only for the purposes of completing my study and I will not disclose your name anywhere. You have been given a consent form to sign, which indicates your consent to this interview. I appreciate your willingness to share your story.

Every story is unique, and I have heard all kinds of things. There is no right or wrong answer to these kinds of questions. What matters is that it is your story. Okay. The interview will take around 30 minutes and it will be recorded. **Is that okay with you?**

Background:

Thank you for accepting to participate in this interview. Now, with that introduction about the reasons why I am collecting this information from you and how I will use the information without mentioning your name, I would like to get some information from you concerning the implementation of the book-sharing programme and the reasons why you chose to enrol on the book-sharing programme as a facilitator/field coordinator. **Is that okay with you?**

First, I would be interested in knowing how you became involved in the book-sharing programme.

- 1) For how long have you been working with Living Hope as a facilitator for the book-sharing programme?
- 2) What previous experience do you have in working with children?
- 3) Okay, thank you. Now, I would like to find out how you became a facilitator for the book-sharing programme. How did you become a facilitator?
- 4) Why did you choose to become a facilitator?

Training of facilitators and book-sharing sessions with parents:

Thank you. You have been describing how you got into the book-sharing programme as facilitator. Now, the next set of questions is about how you carried out the book-sharing sessions with the parents; your thoughts on the training of facilitators and what you experienced in the book-sharing programme in general.

- 1) "Suppose I was with you when you have a book sharing session with a parent, what would I see during a normal book-sharing session, with parents and their children?"

Probe: It would be helpful to hear more about,

- What would you be doing?
 - What would the parent be doing?
 - What would the child(ren) be doing?
 - What key skills would you be emphasizing?
 - What would be involved in those 90 minutes?
- 2) What would you like to see happen as a result of the book-sharing experience with the parent?
 - 3) How does the book-sharing experience with parents make you feel?
 - 4) What do parents do when you call them for book-sharing sessions? What kinds of things do parents say when you are conducting book-sharing sessions (training) with them? How does this experience make you feel?
 - 5) "Suppose I was with you when you are being trained as a facilitator for the book-sharing programme, what would I see during a normal training session?"

Probe: It would be helpful to hear more about,

- What would you be doing?
- What would trainer be doing?
- What key skills would the trainer be emphasizing

Challenges and suggestions for improvement:

I have been hearing a lot of positive comments about the book-sharing programme. So, you can be honest with me. For the time you have been trained and worked as book-sharing facilitator:

- 6) What would you like to see happen during the training of facilitators on the book-sharing programme?
- 7) What would you say are the challenges experienced in conducting book-sharing sessions/trainings with parents?
- 8) Thank you, you have given me a lot of useful information about your experience in the book-sharing programme, strength and weaknesses you have observed. Okay, now I would like to ask you about your recommendations for the book-sharing programme. If you had the opportunity to change things about the implementation and the design on book-sharing programme, what would you make different?

Probe: It would be helpful to hear more about:

- What would you make different about the training of facilitators?
- What would you make different about the book-sharing sessions with parents?
- What would you make different about the recruitment of parents and the children?

Appendix 7: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Parents and Facilitators



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INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS AND FACILITATORS

1. **Evaluation Project:** An Assessment of Parents' Shared Book-reading Quality, Children's Level of Engagement, and the Effects on Children's Verbal Exchanges
2. **Introduction:** Hello, my name Nasiib Kaleebu a student at the University of Cape Town. I am conducting research as part of my study for a Master of Philosophy (Programme Evaluation). I understand that Living Hope already approached you, and you agreed to participate in the Book-sharing for Families Programme with your young children of 30 to 60 months.
3. **About the programme:** The Book-sharing for Families Programme aims to support parents to build positive relationships and provide effective stimulations for their young children by equipping children with pre-literacy skills they need to be ready to acquire reading when they go to school.
4. **Purpose of data collection:** I am interested in finding out how you conduct book-sharing with your child, and the level of a child's engagement in shared reading. I will also explore the perceived benefits of, and challenges faced in implementing the programme.
5. **Approval:** This research has been approved by the Faculty of Commerce Ethics in Research Committee".
6. **Voluntary participation:** Please understand that you do not have to participate. The choice to participate is yours alone. If you choose not to participate, there will be no negative consequence. If you choose to participate, but later decide you want to withdraw, you are free to do so at any time, without negative consequence. However, I would be grateful if you would assist me by allowing me to interview you.
7. **Direct benefits to participant:** Please kindly note that there will be no direct benefits/rewards for your participation.

8. **Risk of harm to participants:** Please kindly note that there will be no associated risks for your participation.
9. **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Please be assured that the data obtained will be anonymized throughout the process and no one person's response will be included in the final report. Data obtained from you will be stored on the evaluator's computer in a password protected folder and will be discarded within one year after the completion of the evaluation and graduation.
10. **Request from participants:** I would like to interview on the book-sharing programme. If this is okay with you, I will ask you a set of questions in line with the book-sharing programme. You can take as much time or as little time as you like. If you agree, I will record the interview, for our records. **Is that okay with you?**

11. **Researcher's Contact Detail:**

Name: Nasiib Kaleebu

Email: klbnas001@myuct.ac.za

Telephone: +256772289211

12. **Supervisor's Contact Detail:**

Name: Sarah Chapman

Email: sarah.chapman@uct.ac.za

Appendix 8: Information Sheet and Consent Form for Parents



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
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INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

1. **Evaluation Project:** An Assessment of Parents' Shared Book-reading Quality, Children's Level of Engagement, and the Effects on Children's Verbal Exchanges
2. **Introduction:** Hello, my nameand I am conducting research on behalf of Kaleebu Nasiib at student at the University of Cape Town. I understand that Living Hope already approached you, and you agreed to participate in the Book-sharing for Families Programme with your young children of 30 to 60 months.
3. **About the programme:** The Book-sharing for Families Programme aims to support parents/caregivers to build positive relationships and provide effective stimulations for their young children by equipping children with pre-literacy skills they need to be ready to acquire reading when they go to school.
4. **Purpose of data collection:** I am interested in finding out how you conduct book-sharing with your child, how the level of a child's orientation/engagement/participation in shared reading.
5. **Approval:** This research has been approved by the Faculty of Commerce Ethics in Research Committee.
6. **Voluntary participation:** Please understand that you do not have to participate. The choice to participate is yours alone. If you choose not to participate, there will be no negative consequence. If you choose to participate, but later decide you want to withdraw, you are free to do so at any time, without negative consequence. However, I would be grateful if you would assist me by allowing me to observe you and your child.
7. **Direct benefits to participant:** Please kindly note that there will be no direct benefits/rewards for your participation.

8. **Risk of harm to participants:** Please kindly note that there will be no associated risks for your participation.
9. **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Please be assured that the data obtained will be anonymized throughout the process and no one person's response will be included in the final report. Data obtained from you will be stored on the evaluator's computer in a password protected folder and will be discarded within one year after the completion of the evaluation and graduation.
10. **Request from participants:** I would like to observe how you conduct book-sharing with your child. If this is okay with you, I will observe you for the first five minutes of book-sharing. "I want you to share this picture book with [child name]. You can take as much time or as little time as you like. If you agree, I will record the two of you on my cell phone, for our records. **Is that okay with you?**

11. **Researcher's Contact Detail:**

Name: Nasiib Kaleebu

Email: klbnas001@myuct.ac.za

Telephone: +256772289211

12. **Supervisor's Contact Detail:**

Name: Sarah Chapman

Appendix 9: Permission Letter



School of Management Studies University of
Cape Town, Private Bag Rondebosch 7701
Telephone +27 21 650-5218
Sarah.Chapman@uct.ac.za

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Thank you very much for your willingness to enable one of our students to work on the evaluation of a programme from your organisation as part of their 50% Master of Philosophy specializing in Programme Evaluation dissertation. We appreciate your contribution to the education of our students. At the end of the dissertation examination process, you will receive a copy of the dissertation in the form of a useful evaluation report which will enable you to make informed decisions about your programme. We also undertake to assure you that the student will always display professional behaviour while working in your organisation or on your programme.

The student will need programme information from you, and we request that you or a designated person meet with the regularity to provide access to this information. Your cooperation in this regard will ensure that the student provides you with a high-quality evaluation and will help to ensure the student meets deadlines. In order for us to keep track of the quality of the student's work we request that you copy the student's supervisor(s) in all correspondence, and that you reach out to the student's supervisor(s) directly should you have any concerns regarding the student's work.

Please note that our students are required to work within the ethical framework of the Faculty of Commerce when collecting information from programme documents, programme stakeholders and programme beneficiaries. This framework deals with the anonymity of data sources, sensitivity when requesting information from people and responsibilities when reporting results. Please also be aware that the student's work will fall within the intellectual property specifications of the University of Cape Town. You can familiarize yourself with the terms of UCT's IP Policy here (https://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/policies/intellect_property.pdf). This policy explains that copyright to any publications stemming directly from the students research dissertation is automatically assigned by UCT to the author (in this case, the student). A student also owns the

.....

Name of the programme student will evaluate (if applicable)

Appendix 10: Ethics Approval Request



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
FACULTY OF COMMERCE


Igniting Knowledge and Opportunity



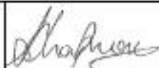
Ethics Approval Request for the Study entitled:

An Assessment of Parents' Book-sharing Quality, Children's Level of Engagement,
and the effects on Children's Verbal Exchanges

Signed by:

	Full name and signature	Date
Principal Researcher/Student:	Nasiib Kaleebu 	November 16, 2021

This application is approved by:

Supervisor		November 16, 2021
Co- Supervisor		

Appendix 11: Ethics Approval Letter



Faculty of Commerce

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch, 7701
2.26 Leslie Commerce Building, Upper Campus
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 4375/ 5748 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 4369
E-mail: jacques.rousseau@uct.ac.za
Internet: www.uct.ac.za



@Commerce UCT



UCT Commerce Faculty Office

16 11 2021

Nasiib Kaleebu
School of Management Studies
University of Cape Town
REF: REC 2021/11/015

**An Assessment of Parents' Book-sharing Quality, Children's Level of Engagement,
and the effects on Children's Verbal Exchanges**

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid until 31-Dec-2022 .

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JRousseau'.

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Jacques Rousseau
Commerce Research Ethics Chair
University of Cape Town
Commerce Faculty Office
Room 2.26 | Leslie Commerce Building

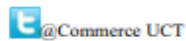
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Office Fax: +27 (0)21 650 4369
E-mail: jacques.rousseau@uct.ac.za
Website: <http://www.commerce.uct.ac.za/com/Ethics-in-Research>

Appendix 12: Ethics Approval Letter



Faculty of Commerce

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@Commerce UCT



UCT Commerce Faculty Office

19/04/2022

Nasiib Kaleebu
School of Management Studies
University of Cape Town
REF: REC 2021/11/015

An Assessment of Parents' Book-sharing Quality, Children's Level of Engagement, and the effects on Children's Verbal Exchanges

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid until 31-Dec-2023 .

Your clearance may be renewed upon application, and incorporates amendments up to and including those captured on 19-Apr-2022 .

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

2022.04.19
16:29:11 +02'00'

Jacques Rousseau
Commerce Research Ethics Chair
University of Cape Town
Commerce Faculty Office
Room 2.26 | Leslie Commerce Building

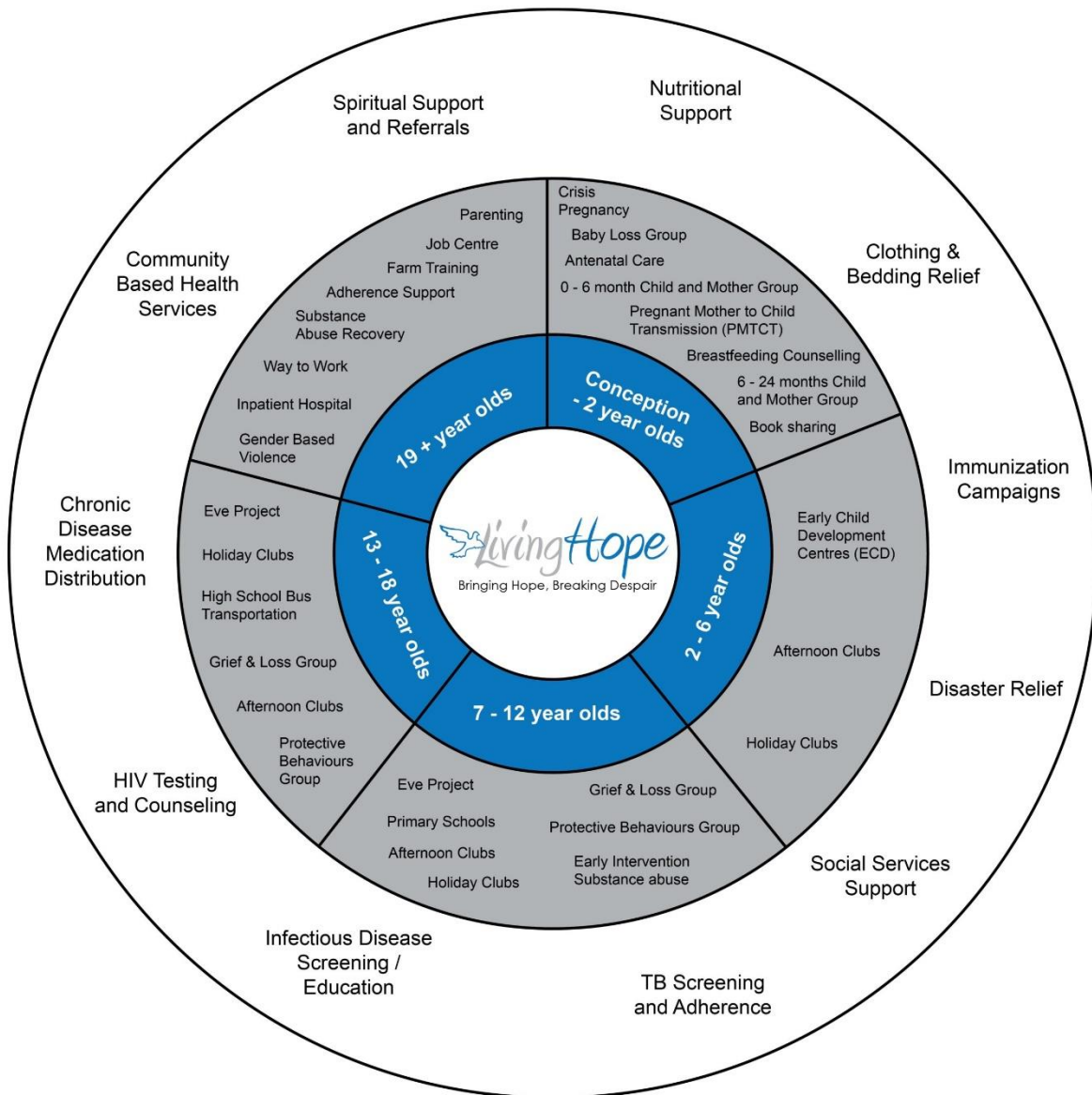
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Appendix 13: Data management plan

Data Management Plan for the Book-sharing for Families Evaluation Project

1. **Project Title:** An Assessment of Parents' Book-sharing Quality, Children's Level of Engagement, and the effects on Children's Verbal Exchanges.
2. **Project Overview:** The Book-sharing for Families Programme aims to support parents/caregivers to build positive relationships and provide effective stimulations for their young children by equipping children with pre-literacy skills they need to be ready to acquire reading when they go to school. The programme is implemented by Living Hope in Ocean View, Masiphumelele and Capricorn regions of South Africa, and it targets parents of low socio-economic status and their children of 30 to 60 months.
3. **Principal Investigator:** Nasib Kaleebu
4. **Supervisor:** Sarah Chapman
5. **Data Collection/Generation:** I will use both primary and secondary data, using observation method. Secondary data will include the baseline data collected by Living Hope on the cohort of parents and children recruited and assessed in November 2021, using NAVE observation tool. Primary data will include the post-intervention data collected on the same cohort of parents and children in January 2022, using NAVE, ABQ and COB observation tools. Mainly quantitative data will be generated and analysed.
6. **Data Storage:** To ensure data security during and after research, I intend to store the research data on a password protected computer – on google docs cloud platform. These will ensure data backup.
7. **Data Sharing and Open Access:** I intend to make my research publicly available to users that is, data produced will be re-used and shared with the public through open access. I will consult with my supervise on the possible databases available for storing, sharing, and making data publicly available, and on which repositories I will store my data in for others to access. However, data will be discarded within one year after the completion of the evaluation and graduation – long-term archiving of data.
8. **Ethical Considerations:** Before commencing data collection, I will apply for ethical clearance of my research from Faculty Ethics in Research Committee. Because my research will involve the participation of children, I will, through the Programme Coordinator will seek for parental written and verbal consent. Additionally, the cover page of the data collection instruments will contain a preamble detailing the purpose of the evaluation, what the information collected will be used for, and a close that participation is voluntary and that parents can opt to withdraw at any point.

Appendix 14: An Overview of Living Hope's Scope of Work



Appendix 15: Book-sharing Characteristics/Practicesⁱ

Table 7

Average Weighted Effect Sizes Between the Reading Characteristics and the Oral (Expressive) and Comprehension (Receptive) Language Outcomes

Reading Characteristics	Language Development								
	Total			Expressive			Receptive		
	<i>N</i> ^a	Average	95% CI	<i>N</i> ^a	Average	95% CI	<i>N</i> ^a	Average	95% CI
Relates to child's experience	7	.48	.36-.60	7	.48	.36-.60	—	—	—
Positive feedback	32	.40	.36-.44	27	.42	.38-.47	5	.22	.10-.34
Expansions	25	.33	.28-.37	18	.38	.32-.43	7	.16	.07-.26
Open-ended questions	43	.33	.29-.36	33	.39	.35-.42	10	.16	.09-.23
Follows child's interests	18	.33	.28-.38	15	.35	.29-.41	3	.21	.07-.36
Commenting	24	.32	.26-.38	21	.32	.26-.38	3	.33	.12-.53
Correction	19	.29	.22-.35	16	.28	.21-.35	3	.33	.12-.53
Imitation	21	.28	.23-.33	16	.32	.26-.38	5	.15	.03-.26
Follows-up with questions	9	.27	.20-.34	5	.43	.33-.54	4	.15	.06-.24
Labeling	27	.20	.15-.25	21	.22	.16-.28	6	.13	.01-.24
Attention getting	14	.00	-.07-.07	13	.04	-.04-.11	1	-.27	—

^aNumber of effect sizes.

ⁱ *Extracted from Trivette et al., (2010)*