Endline report
Language and Literacy (LAL) project in rural Wolaita
For Banyan Tree Foundation
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Link Community Development (LCDE)
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Executive summary

English language competency of educators and students is important to promote quality education in the Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia, since English is the medium of instruction from upper primary school and throughout secondary school. Several studies showed that educators’ and students’ English language competency is currently a barrier to effective education. The aim of the project was to improve students’ language and literacy competence in the 49 rural primary schools of rural Wolaita that take part in the project, through capacity building of teachers, access to supplementary reading material, tutorial classes and development of support structures to implement language development interventions. This project used a multi-pronged, holistic approach that involved students, teachers, school managers, government educational offices, parents and the local community.

Evaluation design

The evaluation of the intervention used a repeated measures quasi-experimental design. A sample of 480 students (240 Grade 3 and 240 Grade 7) from 8 schools in the target group and 320 students (160 Grade 3 and 160 Grade 7) from 4 schools in the control group, were followed over the life of the project to determine their development in terms of reading and school academic performance. Students’ language and reading ability was evaluated using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and school performance was assessed using performance tests in core subjects. The gains of the target group that participate in the intervention were compared with the performance of the control group that did not receive a language intervention.

In a pre- and post-test design, the English language competency (speaking, reading and writing) of all teachers in the 8 target schools was assessed at baseline and after the project has been implemented for two years. Additionally, classroom observation of language and teaching skills were done at baseline and after two years. A school language audit was done to evaluate the support structures in the schools to implement language development interventions before and after the project.

Results

While most of the teachers have failed the English reading, speaking and writing tests in the baseline assessment, the majority of the teachers in the endline cohort reached the minimum language requirements for reading, speaking and writing set by the MoE and some even showed adequate skills. Though there is a positive trend of improvement in writing competency, 50% of the teachers still fall short of the minimum national benchmarks.
The English language teachers improved their language teaching skills significantly to encourage active learning among students. Teachers improved in employing student-centered instruction, using different assessment techniques and strategies to support vocabulary development and comprehension skills of students. Other subject teachers’ ability to use English as language of instruction also improved. Teachers were more confident to use English in their classrooms, though they still need support to use English to explain subject content. The model of LAL teacher training has proved to be successful to reach the core indicators and can be used for a scale-up to other woredas in the Wolaita Zone.

The school language audit showed that English language development became a priority in the school improvement plan in the selected schools through the project. Schools have action plans in place to implement English language development. School leadership created mechanisms to mentor and support teachers and to promote language competence of students. LAL centres were established with supplementary reading materials in English and Wolaitigna to be used by teachers and students. Teachers created a literate environment with locally available materials (using the low cost or no cost principle). Tutorial classes were provided for a large number of students struggling with language development and parents were involved to encourage their children to read and to study. Schools need continuous support from woreda officials to develop LAL to the benefit of teachers and students. The LAL project provided the motivation, training and infrastructure for schools to focus on language development as part of the school improvement plan.

The main question in this evaluation was whether the intervention with teachers and in the school structure would have an impact on students’ language and reading competence and school performance. The evaluation showed that the reading competence of students improved significantly in comparison with the control group. While large numbers of Grade 3 students (59%) could not read one single word in English at baseline, their ability to read improved significantly through the project. While the senior control group (Grade 7) started on a higher level than the target group in the baseline assessment, the target group improved significantly during the project period. More attention should be given to develop reading comprehension among students.

The school performance of the students in the target group was overall better than that of the students in the control group. The improved language ability and teaching skills of teachers that promoted active learning could have resulted in improved learning and school performance of students. Though, students’ school performance could have been influenced by many other factors.

**Recommendations**

Based on the summary of the findings the following recommendations are made to further stimulate English language development in schools.
• The continuation and/or upscaling of the project is needed to strengthen teachers’ language abilities because it is the most effective way to stimulate language development among students.

• More attention should be directed at teachers’ speaking skills (pronunciation and vocabulary range) to enable teachers to express their opinions and explain subject content in class. Writing skills are complex skill and need more attention. Teachers should get more opportunity to practice their English language and advanced reading. More emphasis is needed on teaching skills and to receive feedback to improve their skills.

• First-cycle teachers should learn additional strategies to teach language acquisition and reading skills.

• English language skill development and teaching of pedagogic skills should also be prioritized in the training of new teachers at college and university level.

• Emphasis in schools on LAL should continue and be prioritized.

• Teachers’ progress should be monitored continuously in close collaboration with woreda cluster supervisors. Schools need more support of the woreda officials to give priority to English language development.

• Extensive reading and mainstreaming of mother tongue instruction should be expanded in a follow-up project.

• A comprehensive continuous professional development should focus on practice, follow-up and feedback of language and pedagogic skills. This will help create a knowledge management structure and encourages stakeholders to support each other and generate evidence-based professional development practices.

• Students’ motivation to visit the LAL centres and read the locally contextualized supplementary reading materials should be strengthened.
Background of the project

The essential role that language plays in quality education is acknowledged in the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) of Ethiopia. The Education and Training policy of Ethiopia (1994) stipulates that mother tongue language will be used as medium of instruction in education from Grade 1 to Grade 4. English will be taught as a subject starting from Grade 1 and will be used as a medium of instruction in the upper primary school and throughout senior schools. The application of the policy has been problematic (Ministry of Education, 2010) since the English language skills of teachers and students were insufficient. The lack of capacity of teachers and students constituted a barrier against effective education. This resulted in the current project to improve the language competence of teachers and students in 49 elementary schools in the Wolaita Zone, which is part of the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPR), in Ethiopia.

The project was built on the previous work of Link Community Development Ethiopia (LCDE) in the area. LCDE have been working in the Wolaita Zone, SNNPRS since 2007 developing innovations to the School Improvement Programme (SIP) component of the Ministry of Education’s (MoE) General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQUIP). The goal of LDCE’s work is to provide capacity building to improve quality education and to improve learning outcomes of students. Over the past 7 years, LCDE has established unique relationships of trust with local government departments and an understanding of the local context and issues limiting students’ learning and achievement. Currently LCDE is implementing the Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) to improve girls’ enrolment, retention and performance in 123 rural elementary schools in 4 woredas to promote girls’ throughput to secondary schools (GEC and GEC-T projects). These projects aim to develop a sustainable model for improved education which include several key areas: capacity building at all levels; addressing socio-cultural beliefs and attitudes of various stakeholders; improving quality of teaching and tutorial / extra-curricular support; and provision of sanitation facilities for girls. The Language and Literacy (LAL) project was implemented in conjunction with the GEC project in a sub-set of schools in the Wolaita Zone.

Background of the context

Wolaita Zone is one of 19 zones in SNNPRS. It has a population of 1.8 million and covers an area of 4,209 square km. It consists of 12 rural woredas and 3 town administrations. The main town Soddo is 130 km from Hawassa, the regional capital. In Wolaita Zone the predominant livelihood is subsistence farming and there is 77% extreme poverty, limited land for agriculture and increasing HIV/AIDS infection.
The Wolaita Zone has 453 primary schools and 27 secondary schools. There are 415,011 primary school students (219,498 boys and 195,513 girls) and 52,114 at secondary level (29,696 boys and 22,419 girls). There are 6,280 primary school teachers. Classroom-to-student and teacher-to-student ratios are 1:73 and 1:70 respectively. The biggest challenge the zone faces is improving quality of education. The region as a whole performed very low in the National Learning Assessment conducted across the country in 2010. Findings from the “Ethiopia Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Data Analytic Report: Language and Early Learning” suggest that while most children attend school for at least two or three years, a significant percentage is illiterate. When it comes to reading comprehension, scores are extremely low, with more than 50% of the children in most regions unable to answer a single simple comprehension question. Primary school children, particularly children in the SNNPR, did thus not have the minimum learning competences required by the MoE (Wainer, 2010). The National Learning Assessment (MoE/USAID Ethiopia, 2013) similarly exhibited that the aggregate competency score of both Grade 4 and Grade 8 students particularly in SNNPRS was below average (36%). Similarly, the skill gap assessment conducted by the Ministry of Education and UNESCO (2013) proved that the disparity between teachers’ expected competency and the reality is widening.

Core subject tests conducted by LCDE in February 2014 in Damot Sore and Damot Woide Woredas, where the LAL project was implemented, showed that the average results in English tests for Grade 4 were 46.78% and 42.12% respectively. At grade 7, the results were 48.37% and 48.15% respectively in these two woredas. Correlations showed that those who did well in English performed best overall. This indicated the key role of language and literacy in school performance, and the need for innovative interventions to promote language ability. An intervention to improve English language and literacy teaching and learning is a significant and strategic step to improve the quality of education.

As assessment results indicate, the quality of instruction and the proficiency of teachers to teach in English as well as the ability of students to learn English as a subject and through English as medium of instruction (in second cycle primary) is generally poor. This, coupled with lack of language teaching and learning resources (reading material), has a significant negative impact on the quality of education in general and students’ competency level of language and literacy in particular. There is a need for supplementary multilingual reader production in Ethiopia to support the use of Ethiopian languages in print, especially local languages such as Wolaitigna. The poor quality of English teaching and learning also means that students are not adequately prepared for secondary education. This intervention in English complements the RTI READ mother tongue initiative launched by the Ministry of Education and USAID (2014).

On the policy front, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education has introduced the English Language Quality Improvement Programme (ELQIP) that aims to improve the English language competence of teachers and students. ELQIP has not been sufficiently cascaded to the grass roots level in Wolaita. In order to be more
successful, the policy and established innovations need local support and development to make the support structures more relevant to schools and communities.

This project was designed to fully align with the Education Sector Development Plan V (ESDP V), the General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP) and the English Language Quality Improvement Programme (ELQIP). ELQIP is one of the main components of the GEQIP, and it falls under the Teacher Development Program (TDP) pillar. It was introduced in response to the low standard of English language teaching amongst teachers and its negative impact on the quality of education and students’ educational performance nationwide. As part of the English Language Teachers Improvement Program (ELTIP), the language ability of teachers was assessed across the country. The teachers in SNNPR attained the lowest scores. About 45% of the assessed teachers were in the lowest category. Through ELTIP, the MoE is now trying to improve the language competency of teachers (both English subject teachers and teachers using English as medium of instruction) to help them to improve the quality of lessons they present.

This project aimed to develop support structures in the Wolaita zone to implement this policy with the aim of bridging the gaps documented in the teaching and learning of English language with a strategic emphasis on reading and literacy. This project thus supported and developed government’s priorities and policies to enhance the quality of education. It worked through existing educational structures to build capacity. This project used a multi-pronged, holistic approach that has students at its heart and includes teachers, school managers, government educational offices and the local community. The project wished to demonstrate improved learner performance as a result of project delivery.

The aim of the project

The foremost aim of the Language and Literacy Project is to improve the practice of teaching and learning English, enhance the practice and use of English language in schools and improve reading and literacy instructions and practices in English classrooms. The project has the following overarching objectives:

- Improve the competency of English language teachers (ELT)
- Enhance the use of English language as a language and as medium of instruction by other subject teachers
- Produce high quality resource packs for students and teachers
- Design a LAL tutorial program to support children with language and reading difficulties
- Set-up Language and Literacy Centers (LALC) in schools to create a resource base for Language and Literacy program activities
• Improve the capacity of educational leaders in supporting Language and Literacy activities in schools
• Create a framework of collaboration among all stakeholders in supporting the Language and Literacy programme in schools
• Provide relevant reading and literacy materials for school Language and Literacy Centers
• Develop a guideline for Language and Literacy center activities
• Create awareness of the value of reading and literacy among parents and in the school community
• Design a results-based monitoring and support framework for project activities.

The intended impact of this project is improved life chances for marginalized communities. We anticipate that improving language competence will lead to improved learning outcomes that will ultimately lead to access to better life opportunities.

Project theory of change

The holistic model to improve the language and literacy (LAL) skills of students and teachers is given in Figure 1. By building teachers’ language competency and their teaching skills, teachers can be models and provide support to students in classes and tutorials that can result in improved language skills of teachers and students. By adding reading resources and support from parents and educational officials, the process in schools can be strengthened.
The project addresses the following barriers to learning from CTA: Poor teaching quality (lack of language and literacy training for teachers; weak classrooms management skills, poor language competency); Weak support from school leadership (lack of skills of school directors / WEO; to support language & literacy); Poor literacy environment (lack of literacy materials for learners, lack of teaching resources, limited opportunities to learn - time on task, lack of remedial classes).
Through this model, the project designed competency measurement tools and conducted a thorough needs assessment and competency gap assessment for English language teachers and students. The proposed intervention focuses on development of capacity of various role players and structures to address the gaps identified through the needs assessment and to support language development in schools. The main gaps addressed are poor language competency of teachers and students, poor teaching quality and weak classroom management of teachers, lack of support from school leadership and educational authorities and a poor literacy environment (by adding reading resources and remedial classes).

**Project Objectives**

The overall goal of the project is to improve students’ language and literacy competence in the 46 rural elementary schools that take part in the project, with the aim of improving learning outcomes of 45,441 disadvantaged students in two woredas in the Wolaita Zone.

The project has the following specific objectives:

- **Capacity building**: To build the language competency of approximately 770 teachers to deliver the elementary school curriculum.
- **Capacity building of language teachers**: To build the capacity to teach Wolaitigna and English literacy and reading.
- **Access to reading material**: To develop and support opportunities for reading for enjoyment as part of literacy development in 49 schools by supplying resource boxes including supplementary reading material, teaching aid and supporting reading clubs.
- **Establishment and improvement of Language and Literacy centres (LAL centres) and reading clubs in schools**.
- **Tutorial classes**: Provide tutorial classes for the weaker readers in Grade 3 to 5.
- **Managing literacy interventions**: To build capacity of 46 school directors/deputy directors/LAL centre coordinators to support teachers with language and literacy and administer reading clubs.
- **Support and monitor literacy interventions**: To build capacity of 2 woreda education offices to support schools in teaching literacy and administering reading clubs.
- **Parental support**: To empower parents to involve themselves in their children's reading.

Teachers will thus be trained to improve their language skills and to use language and reading materials to stimulate language and reading skills for students in these schools. Schools will be provided with language and reading material in English. School management and Woreda officials will manage and support the implementation of the LAL intervention.
Implementation of the intervention

The project was implemented in two phases. In phase 1 20 primary schools in Damot Sore Woreda were trained and supported. The project was then scaled up to also include the 26 primary schools of Damot Woide Woreda. The project targeted 45,441 (23,461 male and 21,981 female) direct beneficiaries and 3,050 (1,948 male and 1,102 female) indirect beneficiaries during the course of its implementation. The process of implementation is outlined in table 1.

Table 1 Key activities implemented

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<tr>
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<th>Outputs and key activities</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Accurate Data Exists about learner/ educator language competence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1 Develop M&amp;E framework, baseline plan &amp; data collection tools and project database</td>
<td>M&amp;E framework was developed in 2015</td>
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<td>1.2 Baseline study to get accurate benchmarks of language competence</td>
<td>Baseline data collection was done June 2015 for target group and November 2015 for the control group. The baseline report was completed March 2016</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>National MoE language policies and training modules are contextualised to Wolaita Zone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1 Research MOE language policy; ongoing consultation at all levels</td>
<td>The language policies were studied. Ongoing consultation took place with educational partners and partners from the teachers’ training colleges and experts from Hawassa University.</td>
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<td>2.2 Adaptation of national ELIP / ELTIP policies to Wolaita Zone context</td>
<td>The policy adaptation has been completed by an external consultant and is incorporated into the training modules developed through this project.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.3 Work with local specialists to develop &amp; print supplementary reading materials</td>
<td>A policy and selection matrix for materials to be incorporated in the ‘Language and Literacy’ boxes were developed. Experts assessed all available materials against the criteria in the matrix. 12 English supplementary reading materials and 10 Wolaitigna supplementary reading materials have been selected and ordered.</td>
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### Development of Language & Literacy training modules

Three training modules were developed:

- **Module 1:** Practicing Basic English Language Skills
- **Module 2:** Teaching Methodologies and Classroom Strategies
- **Module 3:** Classroom Language - focus on English as a Language of Instruction

The modules were developed as interactive resource packs and are task based. The resource packs also include Continuous Professional development (CPD) and Cooperative Learning Activities.

### School directors and WEO officials are supported to plan/monitor language initiatives

#### 3.1 Train school directors, deputies, and Heads of Department in managing language and literacy initiatives

All school directors and LAL centre co-ordinators of 19 schools in Damot Sore Woreda were trained in two rounds of training (four days training) in managing language and literacy initiatives Jan-March 2016.

95% of school directors, deputy directors and LAL centre coordinators of schools in Damot Woide Woreda were trained in managing language and literacy initiatives October-December 2016. In total 108 educational leaders were trained.

Training provided descriptions of roles and responsibilities, tools to measure early grade and initial literacy skills and how to monitor the progress of the students’ reading and literacy development, concept of Literacy Leadership, school literacy policies, LAL calendars and establishing and effectively running LAL centres.

#### 3.2 Train woreda experts and cluster supervisors in supporting language and literacy initiatives

All Woreda officials and cluster supervisors in Damot Sore were trained in supporting language and literacy initiatives Jan-March 2016 during four days of training, while all Education officials and cluster supervisors of Damot Woide were trained in October to December 2016 (in two phases (4 days)).

Supervisors developed checklists to monitor and support LAL Activities.

#### 3.3 Annual language and literacy planning workshops with all WEO staff (Damot Sore and Damot Woide)

This workshop was held in October to December 2016.

### Training / Site based support is delivered for reading club coordinators and teachers

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### 4.1 Intensive language and literacy training for all teachers

Training for teachers from 19 elementary schools in Damot Sore Woreda commenced in December 2015 in two rounds. In total 133 English Language teachers (ELT) were trained and 117 teachers of other subjects that use English as medium of instruction (EMI). Teachers were trained for 26 days.

In Damot Woide 85 English Language teachers (ELT) and 174 other subject teachers (EMI) were trained the last quarter of 2016.

During December 2017 training on integrating intensive reading program into Wolaitigna mother tongue curriculum was conducted for 145 teachers (Damot Sore 69, and Damot Woide 76).

In total 319 teachers in Damot Sore (210 male and 109 female) were trained. In Damot Woide 335 teachers were trained (268 male and 59 female).

| Intensive refreshment training at two rounds for both woredas | A total of 219 teachers (DS=134 & DW= 85) during March 2017 |
| Make and take training for both woredas’ tutors, LAL coordinators and department heads to produce literacy environment with locally available materials | 132 tutors, LAL coordinators and Department heads were trained @ 2 rounds each (4 days) (DS 67 & DW 65). |

### 4.2 School based support (mentoring for teachers, directors, reading clubs - monthly supervision)

Minimal site based support took place from cluster supervisors for directors, LAL center coordinators, LAL tutors and teachers up to Sept 2016. Thereafter they received support.

### 5 Resources are provided (teachers guides & Wolaitigna, and English books)

| 5.1 Provide resources boxes including reading books and teaching aids | Resource boxes were distributed to schools during second half of 2016. A total of 7,875 English language books (with a focus on early grade reading and numeracy) were distributed. A total of 12, 375 Whizz Kids Workshop Wolaitigna story series (5,075 for Damot Sore and 7,300 for Damot Woide) were distributed. |

### 6 Parents are encouraged to Support reading at home / local communities engage in reading open days

| 6.1 Annual 'reading open days' to encourage parents in supporting their children with reading | Reading open days for parents were conducted at parents’ days in 19 schools in July 2016 in Damot Sore. Parents were motivated to support reading habits of their children. |
6.2 Tutorial classes for students who are weaker in reading Grade 3-5.

Tutorial manuals were developed during Jan-March 2016. Training for tutorial classes were done and tutorial classes were presented for 1920 students in Grade 3 to 5 identified as weaker readers in Damot Sore. Tutored students increased during 2017. Tutor classes are presented three times per week, one day for each grade group.

Additional reference materials such as hands-on literacy guide and fun-with grammar have been distributed to all schools and tutors.

Tutorial classes started in last quarter of 2016 for 2703 (92%) of weaker readers in Damot Woide.

**Teachers’ training**

As a key activity in this intervention the training of teachers is outlined. The training for teachers was specially designed to bridge the teachers’ competency gaps identified through a systematic needs assessment. The goal was to create effective leadership for Language and Literacy, effective Language and Literacy teaching and to create an effective literacy environment in the target schools through well-crafted activities. The model for the training included face-to-face training guided by experts and masters trainers.
ELT & EMI teachers training

Three major training programmes were presented several times to different groups of teachers:

- **Basic English Language skills training for all the teachers in the target schools** with focus on the four major language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. It was a practical hands-on training programme which provided intensive practice opportunity for teachers. Specific situations were created where teachers had to practice speaking and listening skills, such as listening to music, songs and famous speeches. Teachers were asked to write specific school reports and a writing competition was held to practice their skills.

- **Methodology and classroom strategies training for English and Mother Tongue Teachers** that focused on specific methods, tools and strategies for teaching language with an emphasis on strategies for teaching reading. The training content covered: Language theories, teacher as a model, learning styles, teaching grammar, the three-phase approach to teaching skills, literacy skills, reading strategies, teaching vocabulary, setting up LAL centres, measuring progress in ELT classrooms. Teachers were given exposure to several simple and easy to use active learning teaching tools and practices that they could implement in their classrooms. The training design was task-based and used modelling based on practical examples from the actual textbook content.

- **Classroom English training for second cycle English medium teachers** which provided an opportunity for teachers to practice basic classroom English expressions that can be employed in their day-to-day teaching. The content included practical expressions such as classroom routines (greetings, taking register, lesson openings...); oral presentation skills and classroom discipline (managing disruptive behaviour and feedback); lesson process terminology (lesson objectives, transitions, concept explanation, follow-up, directions, connecting and assessment); and a number of subject-specific classroom terms that can be used to teach science, social science, arts and health and physical education. The training included a comprehensive micro-teaching exercise for the teachers to put into practice the expressions picked up during the sessions. The teachers were encouraged to demonstrate the classroom English expressions they have learnt in different parts of a short subject-specific lesson they developed.

**Resource packages for teachers**

Three resource packages for **Basic English Language Skills (for both Language and Non-Language teachers)**, **Methodology and Classroom Strategies (For Language teachers)** and **Classroom English (For Non-Language teachers)** have been developed.
Though the initial assumption was to develop intervention-training manuals, Link saw the lack of resources and reference materials and hence decided to take this opportunity to develop resource packages that can serve as training materials, reference resources and frameworks for teachers’ CPD and Cooperative Learning activities within schools. A series of quality assurance measures such as external review, validation workshops, pilot testing and a regional review panel have been put in place in the development of these resource packages. The packages, along with a number of additional resources, were provided individually for all the teachers, and it was observed during the monitoring and support visits that most teachers are using these resource packages. The resources included systematically designed activities to encourage teachers to implement Continuous Professional Development and Cooperative Learning Groups in their respective schools. This, if further, aligned with the existing CPD and Cooperative Learning activities in the schools, could prove to be an innovative and high-level mechanism to sustain LAL footprints in teachers’ practices.

Mother tongue/Wolaita teachers training

**Evaluation strategy**

**Evaluation indicators**

The following indicators were set for the evaluation of the project:

**Outcome indicator**

Improved learner reading and language ability

**Output indicators**

1) Improved teacher reading and language ability (proficiency in English) as assessed by reading, writing and speaking competency tests for teachers.
2) Improved quality of teaching based on lesson observation

3) Improved access to reading resources:
   - Number of resource boxes distributed in schools (school audit survey)
   - Frequency of use of reading resources

4) Improved functioning of the Language and Literacy centres:
   - Number of schools with Language and Literacy centres and reading clubs
   - Records of attendance of the Language and Literacy centres

5) Provision of tutorial classes for weaker readers in Grade 3-5
   - Number of tutorial classes presented per school
   - Number of students that attended tutorial classes

6) Improved management of literacy interventions

7) Improved support and monitoring of literacy interventions by woreda officials

8) Increased parental support through open days at school.

**Evaluation design**

To evaluate the outcome indicator to determine the effect of the intervention on students’ language competence and reading, a *repeated measures quasi-experimental design* was used. A baseline evaluation was done to develop understanding of the levels of language ability of students. The baseline data will be compared with data collected at the end of the project to determine the gains made through the project. The design also includes the use of a control group. The performance of students in the target schools that participated in the project, will be compared with the performance of students in control schools, who did not participate in the project. This design allows the evaluators to determine the effect of the intervention (in ideal circumstances).

The LAL intervention will be implemented in 46 schools that are already participating in the GEC project. The LAL project will be implemented *additionally* to interventions that are part of the GEC project, which involves various interventions on school and community level to promote school attendance and learning of girls. The effect of the GEC interventions can therefore not be ignored in the LAL evaluation strategy. In the evaluation of students’ language ability and reading three groups were compared where possible:

1) A LAL target group that received LAL and GEC (Damot Sore and Damot Woide);
2) A comparison group that received no LAL intervention, only GEC (sample from another woreda not participating in LAL) and
3) A control group that closely matches the target group that did not receive LAL or GEC – a no intervention control group.

This design allows the evaluators to determine the effect of the LAL project and the effect of the LAL project in conjunction to the GEC project.

Two groups of students recruited in Grade 3 and in Grade 7 were followed over the life of the project (2 years) to determine their gains over time. Longitudinal studies of a cohort of students have high levels of internal validity since the same person is assessed over time to evaluate development.

To evaluate the output indicator on the effect of teachers’ training on their language competence and teaching skills, a cross-sectional pre- and post-design was used. The language ability of a large number of teachers from the target schools were assessed at baseline. After the intervention a group of teachers from the same area were assessed to determine their competency. It was not necessarily the same teachers that completed the pre- and post-assessment, but groups of teachers representative of the teachers in the target schools. The groups are statistically compared as independent groups.

Additionally to the cross-section design, a small group of teachers (n=22) that completed both pre- and post-assessments, were included in the evaluation. The achievement of these teachers could be compared before and after the intervention to determine development due to the intervention.

A repeated measures design was used to assess changes in schools to accommodate the LAL project. Eight schools were assessed before and after the intervention to determine changes that took place. It is assumed that the changes will be project-related.

Methodology

To understand the context and establish knowledge about the current language and reading abilities of the students and teachers in the schools a baseline assessment was conducted in the target and control schools. The baseline evaluation in the target schools was conducted during June 2015 and in the control schools during November 2015. The baseline results will now be compared with endline results collected after the project during June 2017 (Grade 8 students were assessed in May 2016 just before they left school). The comparison between baseline and endline results gives an indication of the changes that took place during the project period. The sampling process and research instruments will be discussed.
**Sampling process**

A stratified cluster sampling method based on a two-pronged sampling approach was used. Firstly schools were selected and thereafter students and teachers in the schools.

**Sampling of schools**

The project was implemented in 46 schools in two Woredas, Damot Sore and Damot Woide. It was implemented in phases, starting with Damot Sore and scaled up in Damot Woide. For the evaluation eight schools from Damot Sore, where implementation started, were selected in collaboration with the woreda office. The specific schools were selected to be representative of the schools in the area in terms of school size and remoteness from the woreda office (urban or central/rural or distant). The eight primary schools in the sample are Sunkale, Doge Mashedo, Doge Shakisho, Koisha Nare, Demba Zamine, Shayamba Kilena, Gurumo Ladisa.

In the same way four schools in Damot Pulasa, where the LAL project was not be implemented and the GEC project was implemented, were selected as comparison group. These schools were Abota Ulto, Totome Menta, Warbira Golo and Zamine Wulisho.

The no-intervention control group was the control group used in the GEC project. The group consisted of 15 schools selected from Soddo Zuria Woreda to represent schools in the woreda in terms of size and distance from the woreda office.

**Selection of students**

*Selection of students in target schools:* For the baseline assessment a sample of 480 students in the target schools were selected to participate in the evaluation. Two cohorts of students were included: 240 Grade 3 students (equal numbers of boys and girls) and 240 Grade 7 students (equal numbers of boys and girls). The students within these cohort groups, were selected at random from the enrolment registers to make the target group as representative of the students as possible. A systematic way of numbering students was used to select every n-th student from the enrolment register. Each student was assigned a unique identifying number to be able to identify the same students for the endline evaluation.

In the endline evaluation of senior students (in May 2016) 161 Grade 8 students (79 girls and 82 boys) endline data could be matched with their baseline data. For the junior students the endline data of 115 Grade 5 students (65 girls and 50 boys) could be matched with their baseline data. (There could be various reasons
why the same students were not at the school on the day of the endline assessment.) This data was used in
the statistical analysis.

Selection of students in control schools: Students in the control group were selected in the same way. A sample
of 320 students in the control schools were enrolled in the baseline evaluation: 160 Grade 3 students (equal
numbers of boys and girls) and 160 Grade 7 students (equal numbers of boys and girls). In the endline
evaluation of senior students (in May 2016) 138 Grade 8 students’ (71 girls and 67 boys) endline data could
be matched with their baseline data. For the junior students the endline data of 91 Grade 5 students (41 girls
and 50 boys) could be matched with their baseline data. This data was used in the statistical analysis.

Selection of students in the additional control group: For the senior group (Grade 8) a control group was added
that did not participate in the LAL or GEC projects. This control group have not been exposed to any of these
interventions. The group consisted of 375 Grade 7 girls followed to Grade 8, 25 girls from each of the 15
schools in the sample. The data of the midline evaluation of the GEC project was collected at the same time
as the LAL baseline data (May/June 2015). The endline data collection for the two projects was also conducted
at the same time (May 2016). It was thus possible to compare the achievement of the two group.

Grade 3-5 students could not be compared with the control group of the GEC project, because the students in
the LAL project completed EGRA in English, while they completed it in vernacular in the GEC project.

Selection of teachers
All teachers (language and other subject teachers) in the eight selected schools were included in the baseline
evaluation of teachers’ language and teaching skills. One hundred and forty two (142) teachers (30 language
teachers and 112 teachers of other subjects) took all three competency tests in the baseline in 2015. In the
endline 84 teachers from Damot Sore Woreda (37 language and 47 other subject teachers) took the three
competency tests during May 2017. The evaluation is seen as a cross sectional study because the pre- and
post-data of the teachers could not be matched.

Measuring instruments

Outcome indicator: Learner reading and language ability
Students’ learning and language ability was evaluated using EGRA and school performance tests in English and
other subjects.

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)
EGRA is an individually administered test used internationally to assess reading ability. It measures pre-
reading and reading skills foundational to acquisition of other critical skills and knowledge. For both groups

22
of students their ability to read English was assessed. The test used in this study was adapted to the experiences of the students in this area for the GEC project. EGRA measures the following:

- **Letter recognition**: the number correctly identified letters of the English alphabet in one minute (only for Grade 3-5 students).
- **Familiar word fluency**: Number of familiar words read per minute.
- **Passage reading fluency**: Number of words in a paragraph that tells a story that can be read in a minute.
- **Reading comprehension**: The ability to answer questions based on the passage read. Five questions are asked and the score is the percentage of correct answers.

In the analysis of the data of 750 girls for the GEC project it was found that all subscales of the EGRA test showed high Cronbach alpha reliability of more than 0.9, except for reading comprehension (Cronbach alpha of 0.7). Due to high number of zero-scores in the data it is possible that the statistics could be somewhat skewed due to spurious correlation.

**School performance assessment in core subjects**

The school performance of students is assessed annually by LCDE using Grade 4 and 7 core subject tests. The curriculum-based tests are developed in collaboration with woreda partners as part of capacity building. The English tests of students in Grade 4 and 7 will be used to evaluate language performance. Other subjects like Mathematics and Science will be used to determine student performance in schools as especially Grade 5 to 8 receive instruction through medium English. The tests are administered by woreda partners each year. The assessment in core subjects is done for all students (boys and girls) in the project and control schools. The school performance test results for 2015 and 2017 of schools in the LAL project will be compared with the results of schools in the control group. These assessments are used to complement one another and to add depth to the assessment of learning and language ability of students.

**Output indicator: Teacher language assessment**

The goal was to assess the major English language competency skills of primary school teachers in Wolaita Zone, Damot Sore district. In baseline the gaps that hinder effective teaching in primary school classrooms were identified. In the endline the competency of teachers was assessed to focus on learning during the intervention. The assessment included English language competency testing and a classroom observation.

**English language competency tests (proficiency in English)**

Three comprehensive English Language Competency tests (speaking, reading and writing) were developed based on expected core competencies in the primary school English Language Teachers Profile (MoE, 2009). A five-scale performance descriptor (Bad fail, barely fail, barely pass, adequate pass and excellent) was used
to rate performance, as in the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR) by MoE (2010). Language experts evaluated each teacher individually.

**Reading test:** Teachers had to read a paragraph. Their reading was evaluated in terms of understanding of text organization, reading for the core argument, reading for details, vocabulary and for reference and inference.

**Writing test:** Teachers had to write a paragraph, an essay, a report and a letter. Their writing skills were evaluated in terms of content, style, organization, coherence and accuracy on a five-point scale. A scoring guide and assessment rubric were employed for every test to control subjectivity when correcting test papers of teachers. Trained examiners who have professional experience in conducting such tests at the national level administered the tests.

**Speaking test:** Teachers had to take part in a conversation which involved talking about oneself, expression of an opinion and agree/disagree speaking. Speakers’ fluency, accuracy, range of vocabulary, coherence and pronunciation were evaluated on a five-point scale.

**Classroom Observation**

Classroom observation tools were developed on the basis of the Primary School English Language Teachers Profile (MoE, 2009) and an interactive model to science instruction (SEMASE, 2013). Two comprehensive classroom observation checklists were developed for English Language Teachers (ELT) and other subject teachers separately. In the ELT checklist the following were rated: reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, vocabulary and teaching methodology. A comprehensive science classroom observation checklist was developed. In baseline 8 classroom sessions (one per school) were rated using these checklists. At endline 16 classroom observations (eight for each set of teachers) were conducted in first and second cycle primary school classrooms of the eight selected primary schools. The observation data was coded using a five scale rating scale. Trained examiners who have professional experience in conducting such tests at national and regional level administered the tests.

The data from the classroom observation is quite distributed across lessons and hence an attempt was made to summarize common attributes along the same characteristics. Though, a practical onsite orientation is provided for teachers on the overall objective of the testing, because teachers have been observed to have developed test anxiety. This may somehow affect the outcome of the assessment results.

**Output indicators:** Change in the school system assessed by the school language audit
The School audit is an instrument developed by LCDE to assess the effectiveness of school structures. The audit consists of specific and structured questions asked to relevant school staff. To evaluate the LAL project, questions to evaluate the schools’ infrastructure to promote reading and language ability were asked. The questions were developed from the language policy documents of the MOE. Questions focused on themes such as: implementation of language policy, support for the development of language teachers, time allocated for reading, availability of reading resources, attendance of the reading clubs, support received from woreda officials. The School language audit is completed in an interview with school staff in the 8 LAL project schools. The responses of the staff in the baseline assessment were given on a three-point scale: yes it is implemented, it is partly implemented and no, it is not implemented. In the endline a five-point scale were used: early stage, aspiring, developing, implementing and embedded.

Data analysis

EGRA assessment of students during the baseline and endline evaluation was compared using t-tests for dependent variables to determine the changes that took place. Only the data of the students who completed both assessments were used. The achievement of students was thus compared with their own scores during the pre-intervention assessment. In doing this the internal validity of the evaluation is high.

For teachers’ tests independent samples t-tests were used for comparing the means of two independent normally distributed populations. It was not necessarily the same teachers that completed both assessments and the pre- and post- assessments could not be matched. In addition, a Mann Whitney U Test was employed to compare differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed. Similarly, the Friedman Test is used to test for differences between groups when the dependent variable being measured is ordinal or when continuous data is not normally distributed or has violated the assumptions necessary to run the one-way ANOVA with repeated measures. In this analysis different groups are used in the evaluation. The differences found can therefore be related to individual differences or differences that were present from the start – variables that can challenge the internal validity of the findings.

To clearly show the impact of the teachers’ training, a sub-sample of 22 teachers who took part in both the baseline and endline assessments were selected to conduct a detailed pair analysis. A dependent t-test (called the paired-samples t-test) were used to compare the means between two related groups on the same continuous, dependent variable. In this analysis it is assumed that differences are related to the intervention.

The school language audit data was compared between baseline and endline through descriptive data. The use of different rating scales complicated the statistical analysis of the data.
Ethics

The project is done with the permission of the MoE. School directors were consulted to approve the project. Schools informed the parents/caregivers of the students about the school’s participation in the project and the assessment of a cohort of students. Parents could withdraw their children from the assessment should they wish to do so (opt-out consent). Students’ participation in the assessment was voluntary. Students needed to provide assent whereby they agreed to participate in the assessment.

The confidentiality of data was protected by giving each student a unique identifying number and not attaching personal details to the data. The project managers stored the names and personal information of students as well as the unique identifying numbers separately. The electronic version of the data was stored on a pass word protected computer dedicated to this project. After the project, data will be stored at LCDE’s offices and by EMET for 5 years to allow for the verification of data. The disposal of data will be negotiated.

Results of the endline evaluation

The results of the evaluation will be discussed in terms of:

1) The output indicators related to teachers training in language competence and pedagogic strategies to teach English language and changes that were made in schools to implement and support the LAL programme (language audit).
2) The outcome indicators to determine what effect the intervention had on students’ reading ability and school performance.

Output indicator 1: Improved teacher performance in written and spoken language competency tests

The purpose of the endline evaluation was to check whether the project targets outlined in the LAL Project Theory of Change are achieved or not. Specifically, attention is given to the improvement of teachers in terms of reading, speaking and writing.

Reading Competency: General Results

The analysis was done to determine whether teachers’ reading competency has improved when compared to the baseline findings.
Figure 1: The overall achievement status of teachers’ on reading test results

The teachers’ reading competency improved from baseline to endline. While the majority of teachers in the baseline bare failed (69%), the largest number of teachers (59.5%) in the endline bare passed, with 20.2% who adequately passed. The reading competency of the teachers in the endline is significantly higher (Table 2).

Table 2: Reading Competency Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>11.519</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>40.95</td>
<td>12.764</td>
<td>9.761</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2, the mean difference of the baseline and endline reading achievement in the two cohorts of teachers was statistically significant (p<0.05). The teachers that took part in the different components of the teacher competency intervention have significantly benefited from the intervention.

The same pattern was observed for the 22 teachers who completed both assessments and was followed up from baseline to endline. Their reading improved significantly (p<0.05). The number of teachers who bare fail in baseline was reduced by endline and most of them (95%) have achieved the minimum MoE reading competency standards (at least a bare pass), with 27% meeting the accepted standards (scoring 70 and above out of 100).
Reading Competency: General Results across Gender

The analysis was done to determine whether male and female teachers improved their reading competency compared to baseline data.

The analysis showed that both male and female teachers improved their reading competency in a similar way. While about 84% of the female teachers from the baseline cohort achieved below standard, the majority (71%) achieved the minimum reading competency standard or even met the adequate standards of the MoE (17.9% scored 70 and above out of 100). This is a remarkable improvement, but more work needs to be done to bring most female teachers to the adequate standard of the MoE (which is 70 or above) in terms of reading competency.

Similar results were shown for male teachers (Figure 3). The baseline achievement showed that 66.6% of the male teachers from the baseline cohort scored below the minimum required reading competency; while the achievement of male teachers from the endline cohort showed that 83% of the male teachers achieved the minimum reading competency standards of the MoE. The majority of male teachers thus have improved their reading competency. These results showed that there remains a gap between the reading competence of male and female teachers. This gap can affect female teachers’ confidence and ability to contribute to the school achievement of students. A strategically designed follow-up intervention should aim in bridging these gaps.
Reading Competency: Results across teachers of different subjects

The improvement in reading competency of language teachers through the intervention was compared with the improvement of teachers of other subjects.

Table 3: Reading Competency Achievement Results from Baseline and Endline across Teaching Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Mean Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language teachers</td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56.27</td>
<td>11.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42.41</td>
<td>13.88</td>
<td>4.379</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subject</td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>58.51</td>
<td>11.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>40.58</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>8.480</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the language and other subject teachers improved significantly with regard to reading competence. This can possibly be carefully attributed to the considerable amount of time that the majority of these teachers spent in the different training sessions involving maximum practice opportunity for reading and reflection. This significant improvement provides evidence for the effectiveness of the design and the well packaged training interventions, particularly the high-level inputs and practice opportunities the teachers received from the training sessions in reading competency and methodology.

Speaking Competency – General Results

In this section the assessment of the English speaking competence of teachers were analysed to determine whether their competence improved when compared to the baseline data.
The speaking skills of teachers improved significantly (p<0.05) from baseline to endline evaluation (Table 4). While 66% failed the test at baseline, 97.62% of the teachers achieved the minimum required status of the MoE’s speaking competency standard and 48.8% meet the highest competency standards of the MoE (which is 70 and above). Similar significant results were found for language teachers (p<0.001) and both males and female teachers (p<0.001).

The improvement can be attributed to the practical nature of the intervention on speaking competence. Strategically designed activities and integrating speaking in all training sessions helped to maximize practice opportunities. Teachers were encouraged to discuss, reflect, present and micro-teach in English at all times during the training.

### Table 4: Speaking competency results for baseline and endline cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Mean Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>68.18</td>
<td>12.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>25.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>42.52</td>
<td>22.65</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers in the group that completed both the baseline and endline assessments also improved significantly (p<0.01) with regard to their speaking abilities.

### Speaking Competency – core speaking competency areas

Teachers who completed the endline assessment scored significantly better (p<0.001) in the speaking competency areas of 'Talking about Self' and 'Expressing Agreement/Disagreement'. In contrast with the baseline assessment 93% of the teachers reached the minimum standard for speaking English set by the
MOE. In terms of ‘Expressing an Opinion/Describing’ there was marginal difference of scores compared to the achievement of teachers from the baseline cohort (38.1% teachers from the endline cohort achieved the minimum standard score, compared to 32.7% of the teachers from the baseline cohort. This implies that teachers need a more focused intervention on expressing an opinion, as many teachers struggled to describe pictures, events, analogies and concepts in an extended speech form. Previous research on teaching speaking skills for second language learners confirmed that this competency area needs systematic and repeated exposure to a multitude of visual and verbal prompts and intensive and guided practice.

Teachers in the endline cohort differed significantly (p<0.001) from the baseline cohort with regard to all core speaking competencies: ‘Fluency’, ‘Accuracy’, ‘Coherence’, ‘Vocabulary’ and ‘Pronunciation’. The improvements documented in core competency indicators such as ‘Fluency’ and ‘Accuracy’ provides evidence for the success of the intervention design and targeted activities, given that these competency indicators usually only improve within a five year long intervention programme.

Writing Competency – General Results

In this section, the results on the general writing competency test as well as specific writing skills and/or core writing competency indicators are discussed.

Figure 5: The overall achievement of teachers on the writing test

Figure 5 shows that 89% of teachers in the baseline cohort were either failing badly or barely in terms of writing skills achievement. In the endline cohort 59.5% barely failed and 31% barely passed. The percentage of teachers who scored the minimum benchmark (50) and above increased from 10.6% in the baseline cohort to 34.6% in the endline cohort.
The writing skills achievement of teachers in the baseline and endline cohorts differed statistically significantly (p<0.001) (Table 5). The cohort of teachers from the endline assessment have documented much better writing competency scores as compared to the results documented by the cohort of teachers from the baseline assessment. Despite the improvement, a strategically focused intervention is needed to assist teachers to improve more in this complex skills.

Table 5: Teachers’ writing competency for baseline and endline cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Mean Diff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>43.94</td>
<td>12.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>26.53</td>
<td>17.46</td>
<td>7.992</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>17.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the analysis of the data of the small group of teachers who completed the baseline and endline assessments, the same pattern was seen. In the endline assessment 50% of the teachers achieved the minimum writing competency skills status, compared to 18% in the baseline assessment. This is a remarkable difference, given the fact that writing is a difficult skill to easily improve on. The improvement is probably due to the practical nature of the training sessions on writing skills. The teachers were encouraged to produce different pieces of writing in English during and after the training.

Writing Competency –Across Major Competency Areas
The analysis was aimed to determine which writing skills of teachers were well developed and which skills still need further attention.

Table 6: Results for the comparison of major competency areas in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Mini</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph Writing</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay Writing</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Writing</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Writing</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 77.04 \]

\[ \text{Df}=3 \]

\[ \text{Sig}=0.004 \]
Using the Friedman test, a ranking was made to analyze standings of the major writing competency areas from the writing competency test. Meaningful differences were found between the four components of writing skill competency test. Accordingly, the majority of teachers from the endline cohort scored the highest in paragraph writing skills, while most teachers scored the lowest in the letter writing skill.

**Writing Competency – Across Gender**

The analysis was done to determine whether female teachers have improved their writing competencies to the same degree and male teachers. Endline writing skills were compared between the gender groups.

**Table 7: Comparing endline writing competency between gender groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Mean Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>47.77</td>
<td>10.55</td>
<td>4.341</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>11.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36.29</td>
<td>13.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 showed that there were statistically significant differences between the writing scores of male and female teachers (p<0.001) in the endline results, with male teachers scoring higher. Male teachers still have better writing skills than female teachers.

**Writing Competency – across teachers who teach different subjects**

**Table 8: Writing competency of language and other subject teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Mean Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Teachers</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44.57</td>
<td>12.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other subject teachers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43.45</td>
<td>12.74</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The writing competency of language teachers and other subject teachers in the endline cohort was compared. The mean results were statistically not significant. Both language and other subject teachers have scored relatively similar results in the endline writing competency assessment.
Pedagogical competency (teaching methodology)

Output indicator 2: Lesson observations show improved language competency and quality of teaching

This section presents a description of the intensive classroom observations. The observations focused on major areas of classroom instruction to teach effectively. The goal of the evaluation was to:

- Evaluate the pedagogical competencies of English Language Teachers.
- Check whether the practice of using English as a medium of instruction by other subject teachers has improved compared to the achievement documented in the baseline.

Pedagogical Competency in English Language Teachers (ELT)

As outlined in the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Education Primary English Language Teachers Profile (2010), English language teachers are expected to meet a set of teaching competencies to effectively teach in primary schools. Based on the data gathered from lesson observations and post-observation key informant interviews (post-observation conference), a discussion of major findings on the teaching competencies as well as professional attributes of English language teachers is presented below. The evaluation focused on teachers’ educational skills based on the three-phase model (pre-, while and post-reading) and level of active learning in ELT. The majority of the teachers from the baseline cohort were observed to use ineffective teaching methods. The endline assessment showed an improved picture (Figure 6).
In the endline observations ELT teachers used more active learning methods during instruction: 12.5% were rated as ‘Good’, 62.5% ‘Very Good’ and 25% as ‘Outstanding’ in using a variety of active learning methods. This is one of the major contributions of the LAL intervention training. The training included many strategies/tools that can be applied in teaching the different aspects of language for both the first and second cycle. The observations showed that ELT teachers used these strategies in their classroom teaching to encourage active learning of students.

Teachers also demonstrated a significant improvement in the use of the three-phase approach which the LAL intervention promoted as a model to teach the different language skills. All of the teachers demonstrated effective use of the pre-phase (achieved ‘Outstanding’) during their instructions. English language teachers also showed remarkable improvements in their use of while-phase strategies. The largest group of teachers (62.5%) were rated ‘Very Good’. Similarly, the efficiency in using post-phase techniques were ‘Very Good’ (43.8%) and ‘Outstanding’ (56.3%). This is a significant change in ELT classroom instruction. The philosophical underpinning of LAL, which is strategy-packed training for poorly resourced teachers, the continuous classroom observation and constructive feedback for teachers (by LCDE and cluster supervisors), has proved to be a working model.

Pedagogical Competency in English Language Teachers (ELT) – Specific Pedagogical Competencies
The ratings of specific pedagogical competences of teachers in the class observations at baseline and at endline were compared. It should be kept in mind that it was not the same teachers observed in baseline and endline.

Table 9: Comparison of specific pedagogical competencies of ELT teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of three phase approach</td>
<td>End line</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>0.450</td>
<td>4.053</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Base line</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>4.519</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates learning</td>
<td>End line</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>0.330</td>
<td>4.519</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Base line</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.230</td>
<td>4.030</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>End line</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>1.080</td>
<td>4.022</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Base line</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.230</td>
<td>4.030</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching method</td>
<td>End line</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>1.080</td>
<td>4.022</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Base line</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td>4.053</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the Mann Whitney U test showed that ELT teachers in the endline observations were significantly different from those observed in the baseline assessment in all of the teaching competencies. Teachers understood the three-phase approach better and they facilitated learning through a student-centered approach instead of teacher-led instruction observed during the baseline. Teachers’ competence in assessment techniques improved significantly from baseline. The majority of teachers have implemented a variety of assessment techniques. In the training more than 60 assessment tools that can easily be used in classroom instructions were imparted and modelled. The testimonies from the post-observation conferences revealed that teachers have been experimenting with the different assessment techniques in their classroom instruction. This can also be directly attributed to the intervention.

The overall assessment of endline efficiency measure of the teachers’ methodology as compared to baseline achievements, showed a statistically significant difference (p<0.05). This implies that the majority of the
teachers have significantly improved their practices in the use of different teaching methodologies and hence demonstrated adequate or outstanding pedagogical competency skills.

Pedagogical Competency in English Language Teachers (ELT) – Specific pedagogical competencies in vocabulary teaching

Table 10: The frequency distribution of the endline teachers’ vocabulary teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher build students word power</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged students to work out the meanings of words from context</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged students to use newly learned words</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved students in analyzing the structure of words</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped students to know the relationships between words</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed students vocabulary knowledge via different mechanisms</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endline</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers’ competencies in vocabulary teaching mostly improved from poor/fair in the baseline observations to good/very good in the endline observations. This is also a very positive trend that needs to be scaled up strategically to reach more teachers.

The use of English as medium of instruction (EMI)

The language use of teachers using English as medium of instruction such as the science class, was observed and rated.
Table 11: Teachers’ Use of Classroom Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Classroom English</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Language</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful use of instructional language</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of language of explanation</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of code-switching</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics in Table 11 reflected that the majority of the teachers used English as a language of instruction with a reasonably varied range of language of instruction (93%). The majority of teachers were observed to have used English as a medium of instruction properly at the different levels of their lessons. Teachers fully employed English during instruction with very few instances of using Wolaitigna to aid explanations. The use of mother tongue during instruction was very minimal, compared to baseline where teachers often switched languages to give instructions and maintain classroom discipline. In the endline observations teachers showed competence to use English to explain concepts, to manage students’ behaviour (classroom discipline) and to motivate students. This is one of the major achievements of the LAL intervention training which provided teachers with a set of expressions that they could use at the different stages of a lesson. It is evident that the teachers have learned and are using many expressions provided during the training.

Observation of the science class

Table 12: The components of science classroom observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense Making</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning objective</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>$\chi^2=5.959$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing understanding

Language use

Using the Friedman Test, a ranking was made of the teaching techniques teachers in the science classroom used most often and seldom. There was no statistical difference between the four components of classroom observation results. However, it is observed that teachers still need support with English for specific purposes, as the majority of the teachers struggled when using English in delivering subject content to the students. This should be strategically approached.

Results of the school language audit

A language and literacy audit was conducted in the eight selected schools to understand school structures that support the teaching of language and reading skills.

Output indicator 3: Access to reading material

At baseline students in none of the schools had access to supplementary reading material. At the endline assessment schools reported that the number of books (text books excluded) in mother tongue increased from 11 average between the eight schools (total 88) to an average of 48 per school (total 381). For example, Gurumo Ladisa had no books at baseline and at endline had 120 books in mother tongue.
The number of books (text books excluded) in English available in the schools increased from an average of 42 books per school to 97 books per school. That is nearly double the number of books as the number increased from 337 to 772 books. For example, Gurumo Ladisa had no books at baseline and at endline had 150 books in English.

Supportive training was conducted on how to use the Whizz Kids Workshop Wolaitigna story series within the LAL centres and how to mainstream the series into the mother tongue instruction. This training has maximized utilization of resources within the LAL centres and beyond.

**Examples of books**

**Output indicator 4: Improve functioning of the LAL centre and reading clubs**

LAL centres in the context of this project were aimed at maximizing opportunities for students and teachers to practice literacy and reading outside of the classroom. Thus, the project was designed for schools to set-up and run LAL centres and LCDE provided a systematically selected locally contextualized resource, training and framework of collaboration to support the LAL centres. A capacity building training has been conducted for 153 Directors, Deputy Directors, Cluster Supervisors, Education Experts, WEO Heads and LAL centre Coordinators on the overall management and support structure of Language and Literacy programmes within the 46 schools in Damot Sore and Damot Woide Woreda.
The school audit included a section on the development of LAL centres and reading clubs. It consisted of the following 12 elements/indicators:

1. Does the school have English Language Reading Club?
2. Is the room of the English Language Reading Club comfortable for running reading activities?
3. Does the school management have awareness about English Language Reading Club?
4. Was there training offered to English language teachers of the school on how to teach reading?
5. Is there any attempt by English language teachers to arrange special sessions to teach their students reading in the Language Reading Club?
6. If the school has an English Language Reading Club, is it equipped with supplementary English language reading materials?
7. Are the supplementary English language reading materials which are available in the school English Language Reading Club suitable to the level of understanding of the students?
8. Are the students interested in the reading topics and stories which are found in the supplementary reading materials?
9. Do the school English language teachers encourage their students to be members of the English Language Reading Club?
10. Do the school English language teachers support member students of the English Language Reading Club to read the Supplementary English language reading materials and do activities of reading?
11. Do the woreda Education Officials support the school to run the English Language Reading Club?
12. Do students of different grade levels have access to supplementary English language reading materials which are available in the room of the English Language Reading Club?

During the baseline the answers were given on a three-point scale including “yes”, “partially” and “no”. During the endline the scale was expanded to include “Early stage”, “Aspiring”, “Developing”, “Implementing” and “Embedded”. Due to the differences in measurement scales no statistical test could be performed on the significance of the differences between the baseline and endline data.

During the baseline only two schools answered “yes” to more than half of these indicators (one school 8 and another school 9 “yes” indicators) (see Figure 7). At the endline two schools “Embedded” more than half of the indicators, one school was “implementing” half of the indicators, four schools were mostly in “developing” stage and one school was “aspiring”. Two schools had some indicators still in the early stage (see Figure 8). There was a definite shift in the number of schools who were achieving the indicators.
The indicators that were the more frequently mentioned as present at baseline was No 3: School management awareness about English Language reading clubs (6 schools), No 1: School had an English reading club (5 schools), schools having supplementary materials available (4 schools) and No 9: Teachers encourage students to be members of the reading club (4 schools) (See Figure 9).

At the endline assessment the reading club was embedded in 3 schools (No 1). Woreda officials involvement (indicator no 11) and support of students by teachers to read English supplementary material (indicator 10) improved and are embedded in some schools. Elements that are developing in schools are equipping the schools with supplementary English reading material (No 6) (4 schools) and that students develop interest to read topics/stories in supplementary reading material (No. 8) (5 schools). The following elements still need development: No 11: woreda support for reading clubs and No 1&2: development of the English clubs (3 schools).
At baseline there were English clubs available at two schools. This improved to six at endline, with one more school having a reading club being developed. The average attendance at the clubs improved for the last three weeks at baseline from 90, 94 and 104 learners per school. One school had less than 20 learners attending and another a maximum of 402 learners.

At baseline the average number of learners to enter the LAL centre in a week to read was reported to be an average of 74, while at endline this improved to 113 learners. The total number of learners entering the LAL centre improved from 593 to 903. That implies that 310 more learners entered the LAL centres to read at endline than at baseline at the eight schools evaluated.

As part of the School Based Monitoring and Support activity of the project, an observation was conducted on the utilization of the LAL resource books and the participation of students in reading activities of the LAL centres. Critical observation documented that almost all English supplementary resource books are used by teachers and students in all the target schools. Out of these resources, Phonics, Spelling and Literacy Word books were highly utilized by teachers and students. The use of the Whizkids Wolaitigna story series was also very strong, but irregular in pattern. Only two schools had very poor resource utilization rates due to high turnover of LAL centre coordinators.

The schools have also successfully implemented the reading and literacy activities within their respective school LAL calendars. Eight schools in Damot Sore Woreda have excelled in conducting reading activities in the LAL centre and attracting a considerable number of students to participate in and benefit from centre activities. There is strong evidence of student participation through documented sign-up sheets, students’ progress profiles and sample student work. This is a very significant achievement and hence needs to be scaled up to create more practice opportunities for kids across the zone.
Output indicator 5: Tutorial classes for weaker learners

A 30-week long tutorial programme was implemented in 46 schools in the two woredas presented by trained tutors. 46 tutors have been extensively trained on very specific tools to support low-achieving students as well as effectively running remedial programs in the schools. Beneficiaries were 4623 students in Grade 3 to 5 identified as weaker readers - 1920 students in Damot Sore and 2703 in Damot Woide. Tutorial classes were presented three times per week, one day for each grade group. To put in place a sustainability mechanism in the schools (particularly to support effective planning and implementation of remedial programs), a tutorial guideline and tutorial topic grids were developed for the schools to continue to model after project end. Continuously documented assessment records as well cohort analysis scores has proved that the tutorial program has helped a significant number of the low-achieving students to move to upper performance groups in their respective grades.
**Output indicator 6: Improved management of literacy interventions**

The English Language Quality Improvement Program (ELQUIP) was assessed in the school language audit through the following 14 elements:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Is the school leadership taking action in the implementation of ELQIP/ELIC?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Are there any activities taking place at schools for English Teachers to realise the importance ELQUIP/ELIC?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Are schools providing support to English Teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Are there any mechanisms to provide support and guidance for English Teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Are there any documented records to show that the school's provision of support and guidance for English Teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Are schools introducing school based mentoring support to English Teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Have schools organised the initial school based mentoring meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Is there a specific time on the time table for a regular school based mentoring meetings for English Teachers and is there evidence that these meetings are taking place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Is there evidence in the school that the school leadership is receiving information regarding the progress of School Based English Mentoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Is there evidence to show that the school has been submitting a progress report to Woreda and Zone authorities regarding School Based English Mentoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Is there evidence to show that the school has submitted a progress report to the Regional Education Bureau regarding School Based English Mentoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Is there evidence to show that the school has been networking and organising visits to share best practice with other School Based English Mentoring teachers within the Woreda, Zone and/or Region?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Are all schools within the cluster aware of School Based English Mentoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Does the school require other additional support to strengthen School Based English Mentoring?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the baseline only one school answered “yes” to more than half of these indicators (eight indicators “yes”) (see Figure 11). At the endline one school “Embedded” 10 indicators, one school was “implementing” 10 indicators, two schools were mostly in “developing” stage and four schools were “aspiring”. Although some schools had as many as three or four indicators still in early stages none of the schools had more than four indicators assessed on this level (see Figure 12). There was a definite shift in the number of schools who are working towards achieving the indicators. The two schools that have developed best developed in 10 different indicators each.
The indicators that were more frequently mentioned as present at baseline were No 1: Leadership taking action in implementation and No 4: Mechanisms to support and guide English Teachers. There was also a need for additional support (No 14). See Figure 13.

The indicators that were best developed at endline (implemented or embedded) were: No2: Activities to realise the importance of ELQUIP/ELIC (3 schools), No 3: Schools provide support for English teachers (3 schools) and No 9: School leadership receive information regarding progress on school-based English mentoring (3 schools) See Figure 14.

The indicators that were least developed at endline were No 11: Reporting to Regional Education Bureau and No 12: Networking and visits to share best practices and No 8: Evidence that mentoring meetings for English teachers are taking place. These last mentioned indicators are of activities that are more advanced and depend on more developed ELQUIP. It can be assumed that this will be attained after more time in the intervention.
At baseline there were only four schools with an action plan to promote English language and reading of learners. At the endline all eight schools had an action plan. Schools included Literacy as a core component in their school improvement plan.

There was significant improvement in the time allocated on the timetable to promote English language and reading. It improved from only one school at baseline to seven schools at endline.

**Output indicator 7: Woreda support for LAL interventions in school**

At the endline four schools reported that they received support from the woreda officials and two schools received partial support. This compared favourably to the baseline, when six schools reported receiving no support and two received some support.

**Output indicator 8: Parental involvement and support**

All the target schools have included ‘Reading Open Days’ in their LAL calendar and implemented a number of activities such as spelling B competitions, oral reading competitions, mini-dramas, public speaking, comprehension competitions and descriptive writing. This was implemented as part of school closing parents’ days and the feedback received showed that the community valued the importance of reading, but suggested more support is needed to help the community better support children’s reading at home. In some schools, PTAs have a very active role in supporting LAL tutorials and LAL centre initiatives: some even took part in planning some of the Reading Open Day activities.

In the school language audit for the endline evaluation it was reported that on average 195 parents per school attended the open day English reading activities. An estimated average number of 53 parents per school in Damot Sore Woreda supported learners to read at home.
Outcome indicators
The question to be answered is what effect had these interventions have on the ability of students to read and use language to improve their school performance.

Learner reading and language ability
Students’ reading ability were assessed in baseline and again in endline to track development of reading competence of students in the target group compared to that of students in the control group. Only the data of students that completed both the baseline and endline assessment were used in the analysis to compare change over time.

Junior students
Junior students were assessed when they were in Grade 3 and again when they were in Grade 5. The results are given in Table 13.

Table 13: EGRA scores of junior students in baseline and endline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline G3 2015</th>
<th>Endline G5 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>Correct Letters per minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Girls</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>12.9 SD (14.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Boys</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16.5 (17.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Girls</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9.3 (7.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Boys</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19.7 (15.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>206</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48
In baseline students’ reading ability was low. A large number of students in Grade 3 in the target group (59%) could not read one word in the passage and 55% could not read the familiar words. In the endline evaluation 18% of Grade 5 students could not read one passage word and 15% could not read any of the familiar words – which is an improvement. The improvement in reading ability for each sub-group from baseline to endline assessment for the junior group is given in table 14 and illustrated in Figure 15.

Table 14 Improvement of junior students during the project period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improvement of junior students during project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct Letters per minute X (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Girls</td>
<td>32.72 (29.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Boys</td>
<td>40.08 (35.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Girls</td>
<td>13.18 (16.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Boys</td>
<td>37.10 (44.12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The improvement of students in the target group was notable in terms of reading correct letters and reading correct passage words. For example: the target group boys and girls were able to read 13 and 9 passage words per minute respectively, with less than 2% understanding in the baseline assessment. In the endline evaluation (after at least a year of intervention) target boys and girls improved to be able to read about 49 words per minute with 10 to 12% understanding (Table 13).
Boys and girls in the target group improved significantly more (p<0.001) than girls in the control group. While boys performed overall better than girls in the baseline, target group girls improved in the endline evaluation. Boys in the control group scored better in the baseline than any other group and showed significant improvement over time. Reading comprehension for both groups did not improve significantly.

The improvement of students’ passage reading and reading comprehension is illustrated in Figure 16 and 17. While passage reading of all the groups except the control girls improved, the target group improved slightly more than the control group boys, while the control group girls did not improve in a similar way. The target group boys and girls improved more from baseline to endline in reading comprehension than the control group. It seemed that reading comprehension of control group girls decreased over time.

![Correct Passage Words per minute](image)

![Reading Comprehension (%)](image)

*Figure 16 Correct passage reading*

*Figure 17 Reading comprehension*
Senior students

Senior students were assessed when they were in Grade 7 and a year later when they were in Grade 8, just before they wrote their final examination at the end of primary school. The results for students who have completed both baseline and endline assessments were analysed and are given in Table 15.

Table 15: Senior girls' baseline and endline EGRA results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline G7 2015</th>
<th>Endline G8 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>Familiar Word Fluency (words/minute) X (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Girls</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>26.82 (23.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Boys</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>34.44 (27.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Girls</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>26.69 (21.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Boys</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>46.75 (24.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>299</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the baseline assessment the control group boys and girls scored higher on passage reading and reading comprehension than the boys and girls in the target group. A possible reason for the difference in the two groups can be that the control group students were tested 5 months later than the target group. The improvement in reading ability for each sub-group from baseline to endline assessment for the senior group is given in table 16 and illustrated in Figure 18. The data from the girls in the GEC control group who received no interventions over the same time period, is included in this analysis.
Table 16 Improvement of senior students during the project period compared with the control groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Familiar Word Fluency (words/minute)</th>
<th>Passage Reading (words/minute)</th>
<th>Reading Comprehension (%)</th>
<th>Combined EGRA Improvement Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Girls</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14.94 (20.87)</td>
<td>19.24 (27.52)</td>
<td>20.76 (29.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Boys</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14.79 (25.75)</td>
<td>20.31 (31.17)</td>
<td>14.63 (19.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Girls</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5.19 (25.28)</td>
<td>1.00 (33.24)</td>
<td>0.28 (23.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Boys</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1.91 (23.78)</td>
<td>2.50 (29.78)</td>
<td>0.00 (18.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Control Girls</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>5.69 (19.28)</td>
<td>2.95 (27.35)</td>
<td>-1.65 (13.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>14.89 (28.37)</td>
<td>20.31 (31.17)</td>
<td>20.76 (29.24)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18 Improvement in reading of senior students
Boys and girls in the target group improved significantly between baseline and endline assessment (p<0.001). For example: target group girls were able to read 44 passage words per minute with 5.5% understanding in the baseline assessment. In the endline evaluation (after one year) target girls improved and were able to read on average 63 words per minute with 26.7% understanding (Table 15). Boys in the control group could read better than any other groups in the baseline assessment, but did not improve similar to the target group. Boys and girls in the control group did not improve significantly from baseline to endline assessment.

The girls in the external control group that was not part of the GEC or the LAL projects were also compared to the senior students’ progress. In the same time frame the students in the LAL target group improved significantly more than the girls in the external control group that was almost similar to the boys and girls in the control group.

The improvement of boys and girls in the target and control groups are illustrated in figure 19 and 20 for number of words in a passage read correctly and reading comprehension.
While boys in the control group scored higher than the other students in the baseline assessment, there was no improvement in the students in the control group’s reading and reading comprehension, while students in the target group improved significantly (p<0.001). The improvement can possibly be related to the LAL interventions in schools. Because there are many other factors that could have influenced reading ability of student, the improvement cannot solely be attributed to the current intervention.

It is expected that improved ability to understand and read English will promote the students’ ability to learn. This was assessed through the school performance assessment of students in core subjects.
School performance assessment in core subjects

The school performance of students in core subjects in the eight target schools and four control schools was assessed for Grade 4 and 7 students. The results for 2015 were used as baseline data and results for 2017 was used as endline data. The school performance of students are given in table 17.

Grade 7 and Grade 4 students scored lower in all subjects in the endline assessment compared to the baseline. This could be a function of the difficulty of the test used in the specific year, as the same test is not used every years. It is also not the same students that are compared over time, but a cross sectional analysis of Grade 7 and 4 students in each specific year.

What can be interpreted as meaningful change is that both the Grade 7 and Grade 4 target group endline results were better in all subjects than that of the control group, while the control group schools scored higher in almost all subjects in the baseline assessment. The most prominent differences are in subjects English and Chemistry. Because many factors could influence the school performance of students, the differences obtained between the scores of the target and control groups cannot be ascribed to the intervention alone. There may be other factors influencing the differences as well.
Table 17 School performance assessment in core subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 7 results</th>
<th>Target schools baseline 2015</th>
<th>Control schools baseline 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 schools</td>
<td>4 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>53.19%</td>
<td>47.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>50.95%</td>
<td>46.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>52.03%</td>
<td>45.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>48.14%</td>
<td>46.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>56.76%</td>
<td>48.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 4 results</th>
<th>Target schools baseline 2015</th>
<th>Control schools baseline 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 schools</td>
<td>4 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>52.95%</td>
<td>50.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>49.59%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>63.99%</td>
<td>63.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 7 results</th>
<th>Target schools endline 2017</th>
<th>Control schools endline 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 schools</td>
<td>4 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>47.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>44.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>46.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>46.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>43.62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 4 results</th>
<th>Target schools endline 2017</th>
<th>Control schools endline 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 schools</td>
<td>4 schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>50.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>44.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>47.99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

The evaluation of the project was done to determine whether the project reached its goals. Baseline and endline data was compared to identify progress made through the project.

While most of the teachers have failed the English reading, speaking and writing tests in the baseline assessment, the majority of the teachers in the endline cohort reached the minimum language requirements for reading, speaking and writing set by the MoE and some even showed adequate skills. Almost 97% of the teachers from the endline cohort attained the minimum national benchmark for the general speaking competency and 50% attained the minimum national benchmark for the general writing competency. Though there is a positive trend of improvement in writing competency, 50% of the teachers still fall short of the minimum national benchmarks.

The ELT teachers improved their language teaching skills significantly to encourage active learning among students. Teachers implemented the teaching skills they were exposed to during the training. ELT teachers from the endline cohort have documented remarkable improvements in employing student-centered instruction, using different assessment techniques and using simple and easy to use strategies and tools to support vocabulary development and comprehension skills of students. Teachers have thus slightly shifted from the traditional teacher-led lesson to more student-centered instruction.

Other subject teachers’ ability to use English as language of instruction has also improved. Teachers were more confident to use English in their classrooms for stating lesson objectives, instruction, constructing understanding, motivation of students during instruction and for classroom management. They still need support to use English during explanations of the actual subject content.

Through using English effectively the teachers could model language skills to students. Much more attention is needed to develop teachers’ speaking and writing skills and confidence to use English in their classes as these are complex skills that take time to develop. The model of LAL teacher training has proved to be successful to reach the core indicators and can be used for a scale-up to other woredas in the Woalyita Zone.

The school language audit showed that English language development became a priority in the school improvement plan in the selected schools through the project. Schools have action plans in place to implement English language development. School leadership created mechanisms to mentor and support teachers and to promote language competence of students. LAL centres were established with supplementary reading materials in English and mother tongue. The attendance of the LAL centres and reading clubs improved
in line with the additional resources. Tutorial classes were provided for a large number of students struggling with language development and parents were involved to encourage their children to read and to study. Schools need continuous support from woreda officials to develop LAL to the benefit of teachers and students. The LAL project provided the motivation, training and infrastructure for schools to focus on language development as part of the school improvement plan.

The main question in this evaluation was whether the intervention with teachers and in the school structure would have an impact on students’ language and reading competence and school performance. The results of the evaluation showed that the reading competence of students improved significantly in comparison with various control groups. While large numbers of students (59%) (especially Grade 3 students) could not read one single word in English at baseline, their ability to read improved significantly through the project. At endline the junior students could read an average of 49 words per minute. While the senior control group (Grade 8) started on a higher level than the target group, the target group improved significantly and could read about 65 words per minute in the endline assessment. More attention should be given to develop reading comprehension among students.

It is interesting that the boys in the junior control group improved similar to the target group. It may be investigated what conditions in their schools helped them to improve over the time interval, while the girls in their schools did not improve in a similar way. The boys in the senior control group started on a higher level than the target group, but did not improve to the same degree as the target group. There may be individual factors in some schools that stimulate students’ performance. These factors need to be explored so that it can be implemented elsewhere as well.

The school performance of the students in the target group were overall better than that of the students in the control group. The improved language ability and teaching skills of teachers that promote active learning could have resulted in improved learning and school performance of students. Though, students’ school performance could have been influenced by many other factors.

**Recommendations**

Based on the summary of the findings the following recommendations are made to further stimulate English language development in schools.

- The continuation and/or upscaling of the project is needed to strengthen teachers’ language abilities because it is the most effective way to stimulate language development among students.
• More attention should be directed at teachers’ speaking skills especially to improve the vocabulary range and pronunciation of words. Teachers still had difficulty with expression of opinions and open discussions – these skills need a thorough knowledge of the language. Writing skills should also be developed because it is a complex skill. Teachers should get the opportunity to practice their English language skills in their personal and professional environment.

• Teachers need more practice to use newly learned teaching skills. They need refresher courses to focus on skill practice and receive active feedback to improve their skills.

• Focus should now be placed on primary school first-cycle strategies and tools particularly with a strategic focus and more extended strategies to Early Grade literacy and numeracy. This is based on the observation and lessons learnt from LAL implementation that most teachers in the first cycle are generalists and do not have specific skills to teach language acquisition and reading skills. They need targeted and intensive strategic training on early grade teaching methodologies.

• Though science teachers showed significant improvement in using English as a medium of instruction, there still remains an observable gap in using English to deliver subject matter content. A targeted intervention on English for specific purposes must be provided coupled with major components of classroom English to meet the observed gaps.

• English language development and teaching of pedagogic skills should also be prioritized in the training of new teachers at college and university level.

• Emphasis in schools on LAL should continue and be prioritized with the supply of locally contextualized supplementary reading materials.

• Innovative activities such as creating literacy-rich classrooms using low or no-cost locally available materials should be given more emphasis.

• Teachers’ progress should be monitored continuously in close collaboration with woreda cluster supervisors. Schools need more support of the woreda officials to give priority to English language development.

• A personal English language development activity guide can be developed to create a platform for Language and Literacy major professional development components to be mainstreamed into the continued professional development (CPD) activities of teachers in Wolaita Zone.

• A comprehensive continuous professional development and cooperative learning framework must be developed and agreed upon where teachers get the opportunity for continuous practice, follow-up and feedback. This will help create a knowledge management structure and encourages stakeholders to support each other and generate evidence-based professional development practices.

• Students’ motivation to visit the LAL centres and read the locally contextualized supplementary reading materials should be strengthened.
References

Ministry of Education (2009). *Primary School English Language Teachers Profile Framework*.


