



Yizani Sifunde

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



SOCIAL IMPACT
INSIGHTS AFRICA

A triple cocktail approach for closing the ECD gap:
Insights from the evaluation of the Yizani Sifunde collaborative project



Wednesday, 6 November 2024 | 11am-12pm SAST



Intellectual property disclaimer

This presentation contains the results of an external evaluation of the Yizani Sifunde project, as implemented by Wordworks, Book Dash and Nal'ibali and funded by the Liberty Community Trust (LCT). The research and evaluation was conducted by Social Impact Insights Africa as commissioned by LCT. It is shared here with express permission from LCT. The full evaluation reports are available on the link below.

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Download our summary infographic,
learning briefs and evaluation reports on
<https://www.wordworks.org.za/yizani-sifunde-1/>





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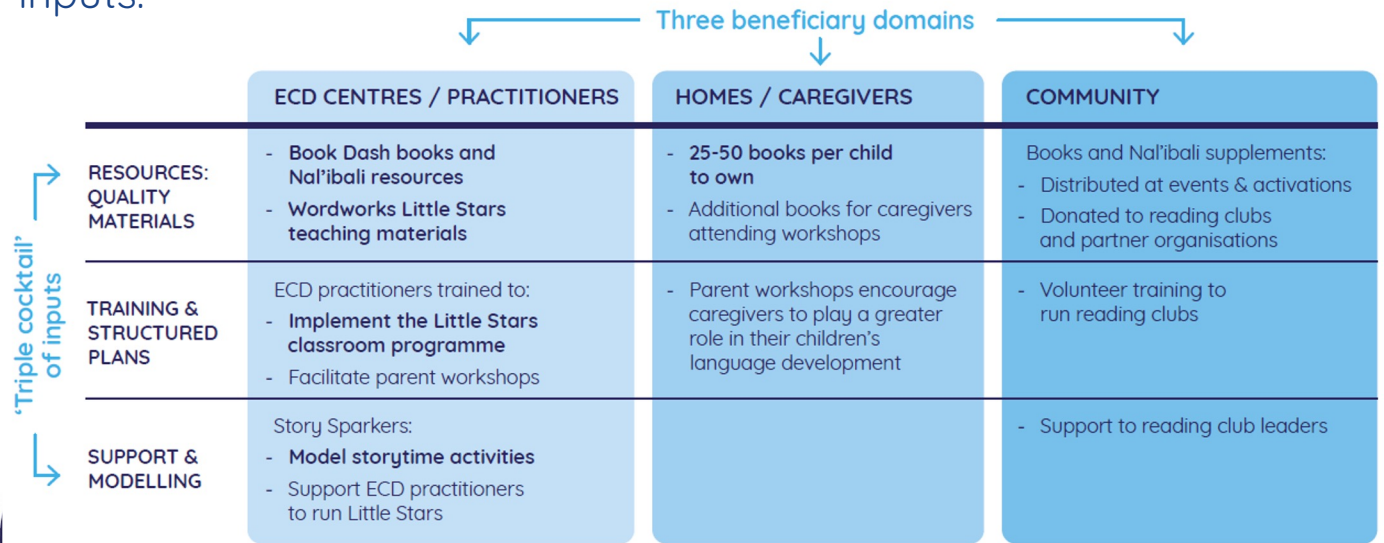
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A brief overview of the Yizani Sifunde model

Project design

- Complementary interventions designed and implemented by **Book Dash**, **Wordworks** and **Nal'ibali** to improve language and literacy of children aged 4-5
- Implementing partners Khululeka and ITEC supported implementation in Eastern Cape.
- Implemented in three one-year cycles (2021-2023).
- Triple cocktail of inputs.



A brief overview of the Yizani Sifunde model

Reach & scope

Over 3 years, the project:

REACHED

1 200+

children in reading clubs

3 023

children in project classrooms

126

ECD centres around Queenstown & East London

7 600+

community members

TRAINED

126

ECD practitioners

30

youth

500+

parents and caregivers

DISTRIBUTED

238 705

books

83 679

Nal'ibali reading supplements



Methodology used in the evaluation (quantitative leg)

Sampling

East London hub	19 participating ECDs in 2023	11 ECDs sampled	69 children aged 50-69 months sampled
Queenstown hub	22 participating ECDs in 2023	11 ECDs sampled	73 children aged 50-69 months sampled

Sampling criteria for ECDs:

Seek as much diversity as possible in terms of:

- geographic spread
- enrolment numbers of 4-5 year-olds
- centre registration status (17 of 22 were registered at baseline)
- fee levels (monthly fees from R30 to R350)

Data collection

Baseline: Feb. 2023

(before start of the project activities)

ECD Level data:

- Survey of centre managers and practitioners
- Observation of infrastructure
- Basic learner statistics

Child early learning assessments: 142 children aged 50-69 months

ELOM 4 & 5

- Fine Motor Coordination & Visual Integration
- Cognition and Executive Functioning
- Emergent Literacy and Language

ELOM R (prev. 6 & 7) - Literacy

- Item 2: Productive vocabulary
- Item 10: Book orientation and word concept

Physical assessment of child growth:
height-for-age (same 142 children)

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Endline: Oct. 2023

(close to the end of programme activities)

ECD Level data:

- Survey of centre managers and practitioners
- Observation of infrastructure
- Basic learner statistics

Child early learning assessments: 114 children aged 50-69 months, 99 of whom are matched from the baseline

ELOM 4 & 5

- Fine Motor Coordination & Visual Integration
- Emergent Numeracy and Mathematics
- Cognition and Executive Functioning
- Emergent Literacy and Language

ELOM R (prev. 6 & 7) - Literacy

- Item 2: Productive vocabulary
- Item 10: Book orientation and word concept

What was the impact on the children?



INSIGHT

Yizani Sifunde was effective and holistic:

Children's literacy and other skills improved significantly.

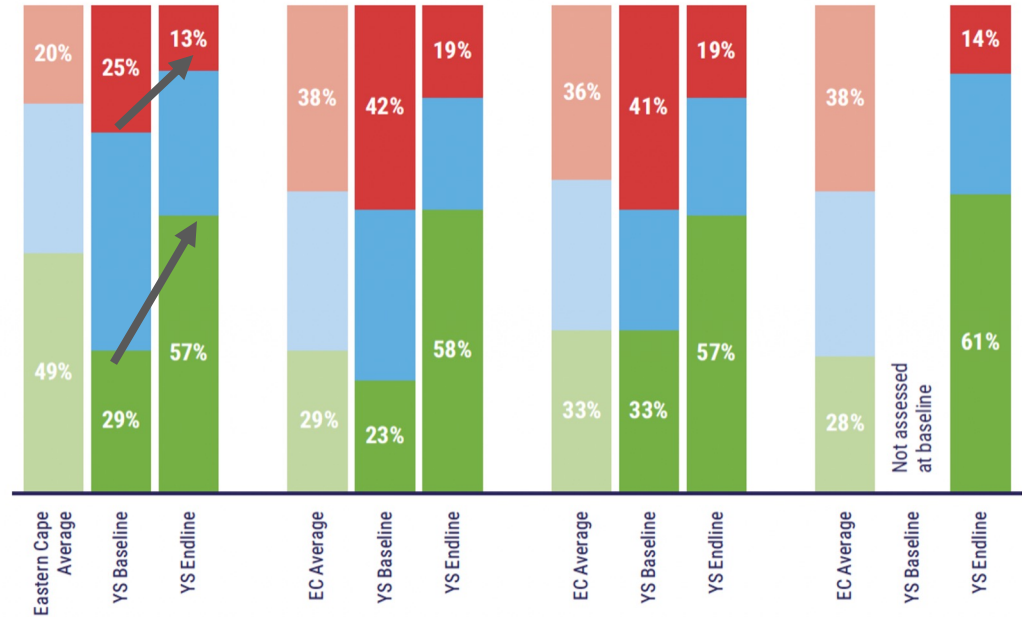
↕ Performance started below provincial averages, and ended above them

↗ The % of children on track ~doubled

↘ The % of children falling far behind ~halved

↗ Endline numeracy was well above the average (although not assessed at baseline)

FIGURE 2: ELOM 4&5 performance at baseline and endline, and vs. provincial averages



1

Literacy & language

2

Fine motor skills

3

Executive functioning

4

Numeracy & maths

On track

Falling behind

Falling far behind



What was the impact on the children?




INSIGHT

Yizani Sifunde was progressive:

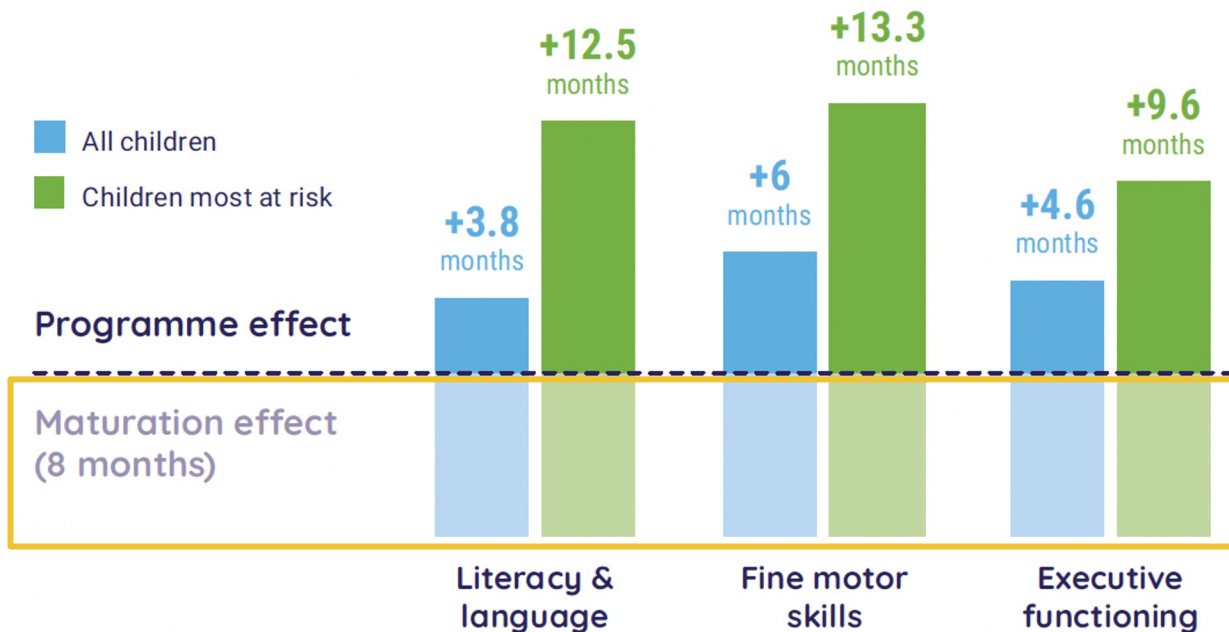
Struggling children improved the most.

In 8 months, the project delivered an average of:

 **Up to 6 months**
of additional learning for all children (above expected age-related gains)

 **Up to 13 months**
of additional learning for children who were 'falling far behind' at baseline

FIGURE 3: Average learning gains in months, above expected age-related gains



What was the impact on the children?



Additional non-standardised indications of impact reinforce that YS improved literacy and underlying ability to learn

ELOM 6&7: Productive Vocabulary & Book Orientation improved (items 2 & 10 from ELOM 6&7)

FIGURE 4: Productive Vocabulary

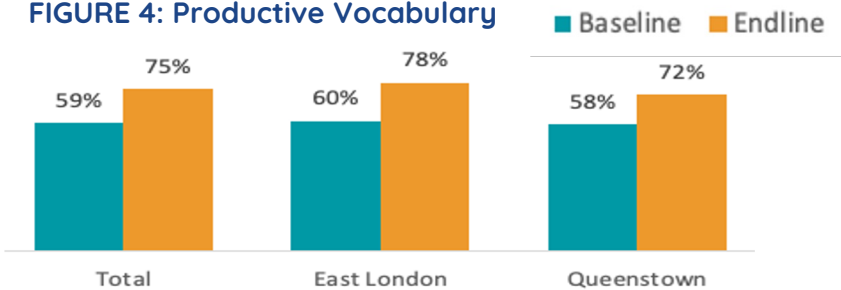


FIGURE 5: Book Orientation & Word Concept



ELOM Extra Questions: Task Orientation greatly improved



- 1 **Productive Vocab & Book Concept** reinforce the Lit&Language results
- 2 **Task Orientation** reinforces the Fine Motor & ExecFunct results - improvement in general ability to learn
- 3 Effect size of some items differs by district, but **same trend across areas**

What was the impact on the children?



1

Regression analysis is important but challenging to interpret because not everything relevant is equally measurable and many variables are collinear. No finding \neq no impact

2

YS was **doubly impactful** because: **YS**



3

Book ownership is an important predictor of early learning achievement (aggregate, CEF, numeracy)

Dependent variables:

Aggregate ELOM 4&5 endline score

Domain ELOM 4&5 endline scores

Being 'on' or 'off track' at endline

Independent variables:

Could not include (lack of variation in sample, collinearity):

- Practitioner training attendance
- Practitioner classroom practice
- Story Sparker session exposure
- Parent workshop attendance

Included and significant:

- Age in months
- Region
- Task Orientation
- # books received

Included but not significant:

- Learner sex
- Socio-economic background (fee level)
- Learner/practitioner ratio
- Attendance rates

YS raised learners from a disadvantaged starting point to an 'on track' learning achievement in eight months irrespective of their home background.

YS was effective even within the institutional constraints of ECD centres in poor communities, where high learner/practitioner ratios and varying levels of learner attendance are common.



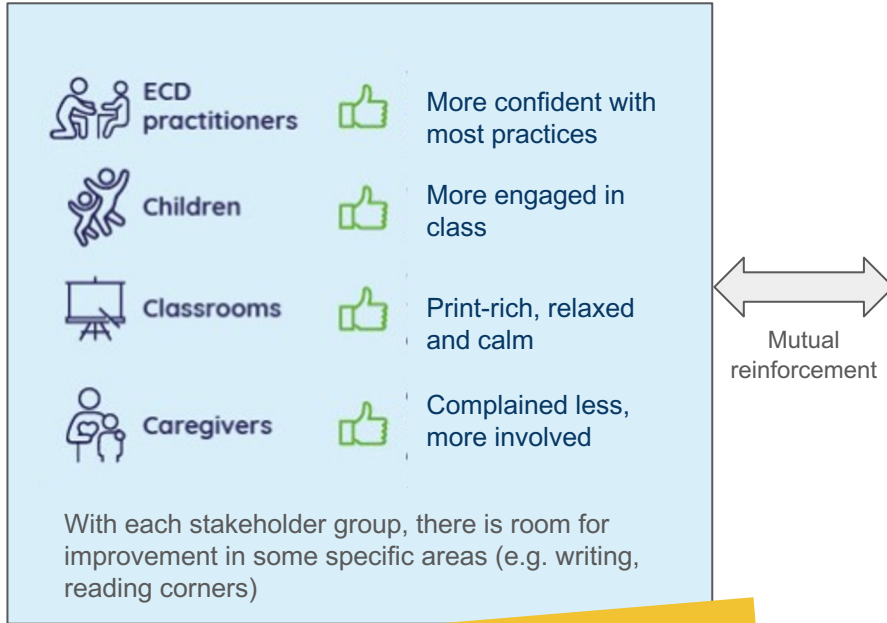
What made these learning gains possible?



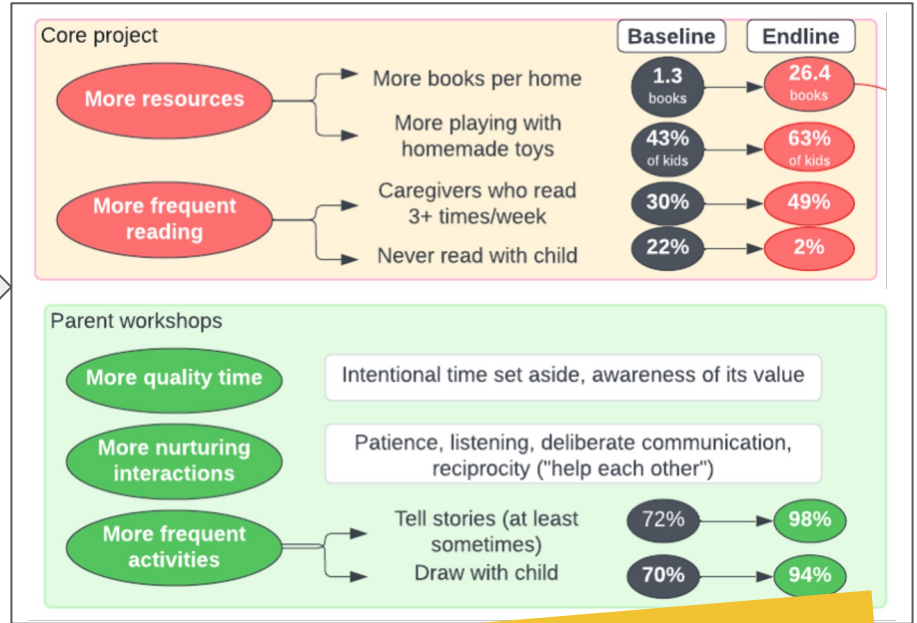
Sustainably improved teaching and classroom environment



More conducive home learning environment (resources and practices)



Sustained practices



Drawing critical for fine motor skills / emergent writing

For more details: check out our learning briefs

Yizani Sifunde: Exploring the impact of a collaborative, multi-pronged early literacy intervention on 4- and 5-year olds

Learning Brief 1 - Project design

available!

Learning Brief 2 - Collaboration

Learning Brief 3 - Quantitative child impact data

available!

Learning Brief 4 - Shifts in the ECD centres

available!

Learning Brief 5 - Shifts for caregivers and communities

- LB2 and LB5 expected for mid-November
- More in-depth descriptions / reflection for the sector
- Keep an eye on social media.



Q&A





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Thank you!



Evaluation reports
and briefs can be
downloaded [here](#)



We'd love to hear from you!

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