



Summative Pilot Evaluation Report ***Let's Read Fluently!***

February 2025

Acknowledgments

This report is dedicated to the educators and students whose commitment to improving literacy in Jordan has shaped this work. Their dedication, resilience, and continuous pursuit of learning are the driving forces behind evidence-based educational change. We also recognize the policymakers and education leaders who strive to make literacy a national priority, ensuring that every child in Jordan has access to effective, research-based reading instruction.

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Introduction

Developing Early Literacy in Arabic-Speaking Countries

Early literacy is essential for academic success as it lays the foundation for long-term educational outcomes. However, in many Arabic-speaking countries, students face significant challenges in acquiring literacy, particularly in reading and writing Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). These challenges are exacerbated by the coexistence of MSA, taught in schools, and the colloquial dialects spoken at home, creating a linguistic divide (Abadzi, 2017; Eckert et al, 2020).

In Jordan, the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) revealed that a significant number of Grade 2 and 3 students fail to meet essential reading fluency benchmarks, with the literacy gap widening as students progress through school (RTI International, 2018). Additionally, 52% of Jordanian 10-year-olds are unable to read and understand a short, age-appropriate text, further highlighting the urgent need for intervention. Existing evidence suggests that it is very unlikely that students will make up for learning loss during the next stages of their education, leaving these children at a significant disadvantage throughout their schooling and life (World Bank, 2019).

At the Queen Rania Foundation (QRF), we recognize literacy as a foundational skill that unlocks lifelong learning and success. All children should be able to read with comprehension to develop more complex cognitive and socioemotional skills as they grow up. Therefore, QRF in partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and BHP Foundation has commissioned this pilot evaluation focusing on improving students' literacy in the first years of their schooling. Teacher training was conducted in collaboration with the Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA) during the pilot phases.



Introduction

Let's Read Fluently! Intervention

Let's Read Fluently! (LRF!) is an evidence-based literacy intervention designed to enhance Arabic reading skills by targeting the cognitive processes essential for fluent reading. The program employs a structured, phonics-based approach to reading instruction developed by cognitive psychologist Dr. Helen Abadzi.



It targets the neurological processes involved in reading, such as letter recognition, syllable recognition, and word decoding through repetitive practice and timely feedback. The intervention focuses on building reading automaticity, a key component for fluency, and comprehension. The approach was further adapted for the Jordanian context, with materials tailored to accommodate the visual complexity of Arabic script by using larger fonts and wider spacing.

The LRF! program includes **two delivery models**: the Whole Class (W/C) model for all Grade 1 students and the Literacy Catch-Up (C/U) model for struggling readers in Grades 1-3. The W/C model supports all students in their home class, while the C/U model provides targeted support for selected students who are identified as falling behind their classmates in MSA Arabic literacy.

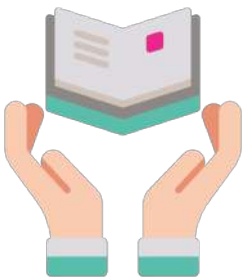
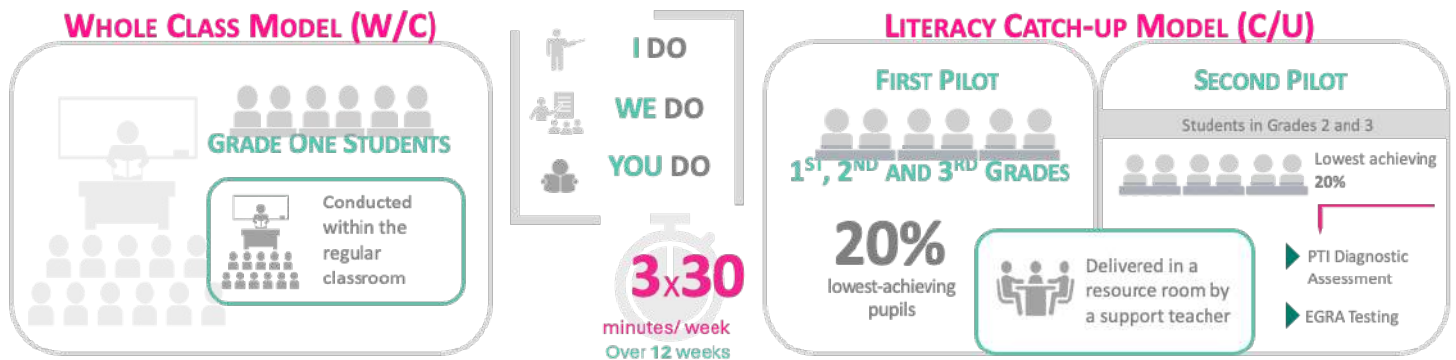
The C/U model is delivered in small groups in the resource room by a resource room teacher. Both models consist of delivering three 30-minute sessions per week over 12 weeks, aimed at helping students process written text more quickly by repeating individual letters, then syllables and words until they become automatic. This helps them decode words faster, leading to more fluent reading, and allowing them to focus on recalling key information and thinking critically. Practicing regularly and receiving timely feedback, such as reinforcement and corrections, are key factors in developing reading skills (Alzubi & Attiat, 2021).

Introduction

Let's Read Fluently! Intervention

Teachers follow the "I do, We do, You do" pedagogy, beginning with introducing and modeling letter-sound recognition using large textbooks (I do), then guiding students through choral or echo reading practice (We do), and finally, supporting students as they independently practice reading in their workbooks, providing corrections and encouragement as needed (You do). The program additionally emphasizes parental involvement, with students encouraged to practice at home, supported by teacher communication and awareness-raising meetings.

Fig.1: Overview of the delivery models

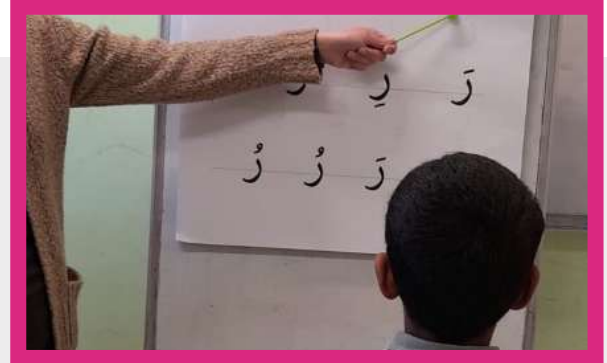


The program is centered on a **practice book** that helps children progressively learn letter sounds, decode words, and build automaticity in reading. The practice book is designed with several key features to support phonics-based learning: letters are introduced gradually, ensuring students are not overwhelmed; large fonts and wider spacing improve letter recognition; and the use of pictures is minimized to focus on phonics. It emphasizes repetition and pattern recognition to help students improve their decoding skills and build fluency.

Introduction

Why the LRF! Program

LRF!, if proven effective in the Jordanian context, is intended to complement preexisting programs targeting literacy in Jordan. In recent years, the main one has been the Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Project (RAMP), a nationwide initiative running since January 2015, aimed to enhance reading and mathematics skills among students from kindergarten through grade 3 (KG2–G3) through developing and distributing workbooks to all targeted grades. These workbooks are designed to align and reinforce language skills introduced in the primary Arabic textbooks. They emphasise phonics and phonological awareness to help students develop foundational reading skills through systematic instruction in sound-letter relationships, decoding, and fluency.



Abadzi's approach, included in LRF!, also includes a phonological awareness approach which is grounded in cognitive science, emphasizing the **brain's ability to recognize familiar patterns: fluent word recognition**, as a priority over segmented or isolated phoneme practice. The LRF! approach encourages consistent, automatic recognition of words through exposure and repeated practice, leading to quicker fluency. Additionally, LRF! introduces letters in a cognitively **optimized sequence**, starting with single-shape letters like ا, ب, ت, before grouping similar-shaped letters such as ج, ح, خ. This sequential progression makes learning easier and helps build confidence early on. LRF! also includes a dedicated practice book that enables students to engage in **repeated reading exercises** gradually where students engage in continuous, deliberate reading to reinforce automaticity, from foundational skills to fluent reading.

Similar approaches to the LRF! models in other countries, such as Cambodia, the Gambia, and Egypt, have shown evidence of promise (Abadzi, 2013). The similarities between interventions include the use of a textbook with a simple functional design, the gradual introduction of a new letter/concept, independent reading, and feedback from the teacher, all of which are used in the LRF! model. There are also early results from a small-scale pilot conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which demonstrated how students' reading ability increased following an LRF!-style classroom intervention, namely, being able to read more letters and making fewer errors than their peers (Eckert et al., 2020). In Morocco, another pilot is testing the reading and the grammar with higher-grade students who need remediation.

The Pilot Evaluations

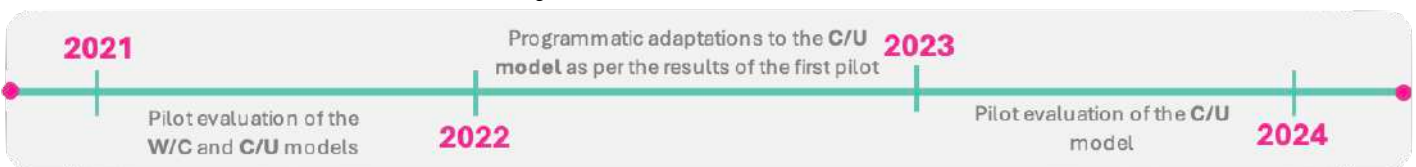
Pilot Evaluations Overview

The LRF! program has been evaluated through pilots conducted in Jordanian primary schools. The LRF evaluation studies were undertaken by an external evaluator, Natcen in partnership with Integrated.

The **first pilot** evaluation, carried out from **2021 to 2022**, aimed to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of **both the W/C and C/U models**. This pilot evaluation provided preliminary insights into the intervention's potential impact on literacy outcomes, identified the key factors driving its success, and highlighted challenges that needed addressing. The purpose of this pilot was to gather evidence on the program's ability to improve literacy, understand the mechanisms of its impact, and evaluate its readiness for broader implementation, including its suitability for an Efficacy Randomised Control Trial (RCT).

The **second pilot**, conducted between **2023 to 2024**, responded directly to the findings and challenges identified in the first pilot with the C/U model, which was not successful in showing evidence of promise. This revised pilot focused exclusively on the **C/U model** and aimed to address the limitations that emerged from the earlier evaluation.

Fig.2: Overview of the evaluation timeline



The Pilot Evaluations

Pilot Evaluations Overview

The pilot evaluations were structured around primary research questions, which were designed to address **three key evaluation pillars** mainly covering whether the outcome measures were appropriate and feasible to measure.

1

Evidence of Promise

Evidence of Promise for effectiveness of the LRF! program in comparison to standard practices, focusing on changes in school, teacher behavior, and student outcomes. It also focused on the mechanism of changes in validation of the logic model as well as any unintended consequences, both positive and negative, resulting from the model's implementation.

2

Feasibility of Implementation

It also looked into the **feasibility of the intervention**, particularly whether the model was delivered as planned, the effectiveness of diagnostic tools for identifying suitable students for the C/U model, and any challenges encountered in training and coaching teachers.

3

Readiness for an Efficacy Trial

The last pillar explored the **readiness for an efficacy trial** and investigated the practicality of key trial components like school recruitment, data collection, and resource and instruments use. These pillars also assessed the readiness for trial by considering necessary adjustments to the logic models, intervention materials, implementation models, and produced insights based statistical estimates to ensure the trial's success.

Methodology

First Evaluation Pilot 2021–2022

The evaluation employed a **three-arm cluster RCT design** conducted in Jordanian primary schools. A total of 24 schools were randomly allocated into three arms: W/C model (8 schools), C/U model (8 schools), and a control group (8 schools). Randomisation was performed at the school level, with schools stratified by region and urban/rural classification to ensure balance across the groups. Multilevel models were used for analysis to account for the clustering of students within classes and schools.

The primary aim (outcome) was to measure the impact of the intervention on Arabic literacy attainment among Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 students. The selection of students for the C/U model was carried out by teachers, using the coarse grained diagnostic tool developed by RAMP - already in use in Jordanian classrooms. Secondary outcomes included sub-domains of literacy such as letter sound identification, syllable identification, oral reading fluency (ORF), and reading comprehension. Data was collected at baseline and endline using the EGRA+pre-lit assessment.

The pilot evaluation has two main components: **Impact Evaluation (IE) and Implementation and Process Evaluation (IPE)**. The IE focused on assessing the evidence of promise of the impact of the program using quantitative measures, primarily the EGRA+pre-lit assessment, to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness in improving literacy. The IPE, provided mix-methods insights into the implementation of the intervention through focus group discussions (FGDs) with teachers, parents, and students, classroom observations, a teacher survey, and a student survey.

Second Evaluation Pilot 2023–2024

Rationale

The second C/U model pilot sought to understand if using a revised approach of implementation could achieve the positive outcomes related to literacy improvements. The first pilot identified challenges in teacher training, student selection, and program materials. To address these the following changes were made:

- The capacity for resource room sessions was capped at six students.
- Teacher training was extended to two days, focusing solely on resource room teachers.
- Ongoing support was provided through fortnightly online meetings and a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to further strengthen teacher capacity.

Methodology

Second Evaluation Pilot 2023–2024

- The practice book was revised to improve clarity, content density, and readability. These changes came to address concerns with the original practice book, which was criticized for its "one-size-fits-all" approach.
- Grade 1 C/U students were excluded due to challenges with the content's complexity.
- The pacing of content delivery was adjusted to better accommodate struggling students.
- Most importantly, the revised pilot implemented a more robust screening process, to filter out the students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and learning delay for whom the intervention of LRF! was inappropriate. This screening process combined the following:
 - a. Coarse-grained Screening from the RAMP Tool: Classroom teachers identified the lowest-performing 20% of students.
 - b. Princess Taghrid Institute (PTI) Diagnostic Assessment: Specialists conducted assessments to exclude students with broader learning difficulties.
 - c. EGRA Testing: Students scoring ≤ 29 correct words per minute for ORF were identified as needing intervention support.

Approach

The methodology followed an RCT design in which **16 (8 control and 8 treatment) schools** in Jordan were randomly assigned to either the intervention group (receiving the LRF! C/U model) or a control group (usual practice). Schools were stratified by region and urban/rural classification to ensure balanced randomisation. Within each school, up to three classes per grade (Grades 2 and 3) were selected, and students were screened using the process described above.

Methodology

Evaluation Arms, Sample Size & Attrition Rate

The figure below illustrates the key similarities and differences between the methodology and components undertaken in the first and second pilot evaluations.

Fig.3: Methodological overview

First Evaluation Pilot 2021-2022

- **24 schools, three arms:** W/C model (8 schools), C/U model (8 schools), and a control group (8 schools).
- Grade 1 for the W/C, and Grades 1,2,3 for the C/U model
- **W/C:** 488 Students (269 intervention, 219 control). [11.3% attrition]
- **C/U:** 299 students (150 intervention, 149 control) [30.1% attrition]

Primary Outcome: Arabic Literacy Attainment

Second Evaluation Pilot 2023-2024

- **16 schools, two arms:** (8 treatment, and 8 control)
- C/U model only for grades 2 and 3.
- 161 Students Randomised, (99 intervention, 65 control), [2% attrition]

Primary Outcome: Oral Reading Fluency

Impact Evaluation: Outcome Measures and Data Sources

Fig.4: Overview of data sources and outcome measures

Primary Outcome Pilot Analysis

- First Pilot: The primary outcome was Arabic Literacy Attainment among Grade 1, 2, and 3 students in Jordan, measured using the EGRA + pre-literacy tool.
- Second Pilot: The primary outcome was **ORF** among Grade 2 and 3 students in Jordan, measured using the EGRA + pre-literacy tool.

Secondary Outcome Pilot Analysis

- First Pilot: Sub-domains: ORF, letter sound identification, syllable identification, and reading comprehension.
- Second Pilot: Sub-domains: Arabic literacy attainment, letter sound identification, syllable identification, reading comprehension, word decoding, and listening comprehension.

Methodology

Implementation and Process Evaluation: Tools and Sources

Table 1: Overview of IPE tools and data sources

Data Collection Tool	First Pilot Evaluation	Second Pilot Evaluation
Teacher Survey – The teacher survey covered experiences of LRF! training and coaching, engagement with parents, and perceptions of LRF!. It was completed by the teachers of both LRF! Models.		
Teacher FGDs – with resource and classroom teachers to assess their understanding, implementation experiences, feedback on the intervention (treatment groups), and comparing usual literacy teaching practices with those in the intervention, to understand differences in approaches (control groups).		
Coach FGDs: Focused on coaches' perceptions of the program's delivery, challenges, and effectiveness, based on their scheduled visits to the schools with the purpose of coaching, and observing fidelity of implementation		
Classroom and Resource Room Observations: Assessed fidelity and quality of intervention delivery, including engagement and adherence to the prescribed teaching methods.		
Coaching Observations: Evaluated the quality and effectiveness of coaching sessions and any adjustments made by teachers during the intervention.		

Methodology

Implementation and Process Evaluation: Tools and Sources

Table 1: Overview of IPE tools and data sources

Data Collection Tool	First Pilot Evaluation	Second Pilot Evaluation
Training Attendance Data: Measured the dosage and fidelity of the intervention by tracking teacher participation in training and coaching sessions.	●	●
School Recruitment and Retention Data: Measured the reach and feasibility of the intervention by tracking school participation and retention rates.	●	●
Student Survey: Aimed to assess student engagement, interest in reading, access and usage of the internet, and reflections on the LRF! Intervention.	●	
Parent FGDs: To gather their views on the impact of the intervention on their children, student engagement at home, and the role of parents in supporting the intervention.	●	



Key Findings

Whole Class Model (W/C)

Evidence of Promise

The model significantly improved early literacy skills in Grade 1 students, particularly in reading comprehension, letter-sound recognition, ORF, syllable identification and word decoding, with benefits for students struggling with foundational reading skills. The IE showed that children engaged in the W/C model schools consistently outperformed those in control schools in key literacy domains. Teachers reported clear improvements in students' ability to decode words and engage with reading materials more confidently. EGRA standardised assessments corroborated this, with significant evidence of effects across primary and all secondary outcomes. For instance, students in the intervention group demonstrated stronger ORF, reading an average of 8.25 words per minute compared to 4.41 in the control schools, noting the baseline across the two groups averaged 2.27.

Students' engagement and confidence in reading significantly improved, with teachers, parents, and coaches observing greater participation, enthusiasm, and skill development. Teachers reported that students were more confident in reading aloud and interacting with texts, attributing this progress to the structured "I do, We do, You do" approach, which encouraged progressive independence in learning. Parents and coaches reinforced these findings, noting that the intervention not only enhanced reading skills but also increased children's willingness to read at home and improved their comprehension.

Classroom observations confirmed that the W/C model effectively strengthened students' foundational literacy skills, fostering greater engagement and reading fluency. During independent reading sessions, students actively practiced decoding and word recognition, using their fingers to follow along with the text. Teachers provided real-time feedback and support, helping students build confidence and fluency, which were crucial for improving reading comprehension.

Feasibility of the Intervention

The W/C model proved to be feasible to implement during the pilot phase. Most schools adhered to the intervention's core structure and pedagogical framework, with teachers delivering sessions as intended. However, while the model was generally successful, the pilot revealed several areas where adaptations were needed to optimize the model for diverse classroom environments.

Key Findings

Whole Class Model (W/C)

Feasibility of the Intervention

The W/C model provided structured literacy instruction while fostering a holistic learning environment that extended beyond the classroom, strengthening reading skills through consistent practice and active parental involvement. Teachers implemented the program with high fidelity, delivering three at least 30-minute sessions over 12 weeks, though session durations were adjusted as needed to better support student learning. Teachers followed the "I do, We do, You do" approach to gradually build students' confidence and independence in reading. The practice book was a key tool in this process, with all students receiving their own copy, which they regularly used in class and at home to reinforce their learning.

Beyond the classroom, parents played an active role in supporting literacy development, engaging with their children's reading through WhatsApp communication with teachers, further strengthening comprehension and fluency.

The standardized session length alone did not fully accommodate the diverse literacy needs and proficiency levels of all students, making the flexibility of the model essential. While the intervention followed a structured format, its adaptable design allowed teachers to modify lesson pacing and session duration to better support students who required additional time and guidance. Many teachers extended the 30-minute sessions for struggling students, providing extra opportunities for independent practice and targeted instruction. Additionally, the ability to adjust the pace of lessons based on students' comprehension levels ensured that all learners, regardless of their starting literacy ability, could progress at a pace suited to their needs.

The effectiveness of the W/C model was hindered by the complexity of the practice book for some students, particularly those in Grade 1 and those struggling with literacy, highlighting the need for differentiated materials and more structured instructional guidance. While the practice book was a valuable tool for reinforcing reading skills, some teachers and parents found that some of the content was too advanced, making it difficult for younger or lower-level readers to fully engage with the intervention. To address this, teachers suggested the creation of differentiated versions of the practice book, one with simplified content for lower-level readers and another with more advanced material for stronger readers, to ensure that all students could access content at an appropriate level.

Key Findings

Whole Class Model (W/C)

Feasibility of the Intervention

While teacher training was a crucial component of the intervention, ongoing support and more frequent coaching were needed to effectively address the complexities of classroom implementation, particularly for students with lower literacy skills. The one-day training sessions were well-received, equipping teachers with a strong understanding of the LRF! approach and the foundational tools to implement the model. However, many teachers felt that a single training session was insufficient to fully prepare them for the challenges they encountered, particularly in classrooms with diverse literacy abilities.

To bridge this gap, coaches conducted up to three classroom visits per semester, providing teachers with real-time feedback and in-class support to refine their approach. While these coaching sessions were highly valuable, teachers expressed a strong need for more frequent visits, as additional coaching would have helped them troubleshoot challenges, adapt strategies for mixed-ability classrooms, and maintain intervention fidelity.

Readiness for Future Trial

While the W/C model demonstrated strong potential and was feasible to implement on a small scale, the pilot evaluation highlighted that several modifications are needed to optimize the model for large-scale implementation.

The evidence for scaling gathered from the pilot evaluation points to the W/C model being ready for scaling, with a strong foundation for future trials. The intervention demonstrated promising results on literacy outcomes, and the majority of teachers successfully implemented the model with fidelity. The intervention showed promising results, with significant improvements in key literacy metrics, suggesting that it has the potential to deliver positive impacts on a larger scale. Most teachers were able to follow the structure of the intervention and implement the reading strategies effectively. Teachers reported that the structured framework and the use of the practice book helped students engage with the material and make progress in their literacy skills.

Key Findings

Whole Class Model (W/C)

Readiness for Future Trial

While the W/C model showed promise, the pilot evaluation highlighted areas that require modification to ensure its success when scaled up. These modifications would help optimize the intervention for diverse classrooms and ensure its effectiveness across a broader population.

- **Extended Session Duration:** Teachers recommended increasing session time beyond 30 minutes to allow for more independent practice and feedback, and suggested implementing the intervention over two semesters instead of one for deeper literacy development.
- **Adapted Practice Materials:** Grade 1 teachers noted that some practice book content was too complex for struggling readers, recommending differentiated versions to better match students' varying literacy levels.
- **Alignment with National Curriculum:** Teachers suggested further integrating the W/C model with the national curriculum to facilitate smoother incorporation into daily classroom instruction.
- **Teacher Training and Support:** Scaling the W/C model requires continuous professional development, including follow-up training and coaching, to help teachers manage mixed-ability classrooms and tailor instruction to students' needs.
- **Regional Recruitment Challenges:** While recruitment was easier in southern Jordan, logistical challenges in central and northern regions can be improved through strategic efforts involving local education authorities and community leaders to ensure nationwide accessibility.

Key Findings

Literacy Catch-up Model (C/U)

Evidence of Promise

The C/U Model (First Pilot) did not demonstrate evidence of improvement on either Arabic literacy attainment (ALA) or any of the EGRA subdomains.

The C/U Model (Second Pilot) showed evidence of improvement in ORF (0.25), which was the primary outcome of this pilot, with a mean score of around 9.5 words per minute at the endline for the intervention group, compared to 6.4 in the usual practice group, noting the average for both groups was 3.09 at baseline. The sub-domains with the promising results were syllable identification and word decoding. Meanwhile, the other four domains did not show an indication of effect.

The C/U Model (First Pilot) revealed that the practice book in the C/U Model was not appropriately tailored to students' literacy levels, particularly for Grade 1 learners. Teachers observed that the material's complexity hindered student participation, leading to disengagement and, in some cases, perceived adverse psychological effects. To address this issue, the second pilot focused on Grade 2 and Grade 3 students, ensuring better alignment with their literacy needs and improving engagement with the material.

The C/U Model (Second Pilot) improved the appropriateness of the practice book by modifying font sizes, increasing spacing, and simplifying difficult words and syllables, making the materials more accessible and better suited to students' literacy levels. Observers reported that these revisions led to higher student engagement and reduced frustration, enabling more effective participation in lessons and progress in reading skills. However, despite these improvements, the lack of methodological variety remained a concern. Specifically, there was still a need for more one-on-one support and a personalized approach for students with lower abilities.

The C/U Model (First Pilot) Insufficient teacher training and support for resource room teachers, particularly those working with Grade 1 students, led to inconsistent delivery and challenges in addressing diverse student needs in the first pilot. Teachers required more tailored training to effectively support students struggling with reading, highlighting the need for a more structured and targeted approach to professional development.

Key Findings

Literacy Catch-up Model (C/U)

Evidence of Promise

The C/U Model (Second Pilot) enhanced teacher training and ongoing support significantly improved the effectiveness of instruction. Teachers participated in a two-day training session specifically designed for resource room teachers, focusing on strategies for supporting struggling readers. Additionally, fortnightly online meetings and participation in a PLC provided continuous support throughout the intervention. Teachers reported that these training and coaching sessions greatly enhanced their ability to deliver the intervention, making them more confident in differentiated instruction and better equipped to meet the needs of struggling readers.

For both models, the duration and intensity of intervention sessions emerged as key concerns, as resource room teachers noted that session length varied based on student abilities, often preventing the completion of planned activities. These challenges highlight broader implications for both students and teachers, highlighting the need for structural adjustments to optimize the intervention's effectiveness and delivery.

Feasibility of the Intervention

The C/U Model (First Pilot) the student selection process was a significant issue. The coarse-grained diagnostic tool used to select students did not adequately match students' literacy levels with the content of LRF! This led to frustration and disengagement from the intervention.

In response, the second pilot implemented a more refined student selection process by integrating the coarse-grained diagnostic tool with PTI assessments and EGRA scores. However, this approach did not yield conclusive improvements. The revised screening process aimed to select the most appropriate students in Grade 2 and Grade 3, with a particular focus on struggling readers. Teachers noted that this more targeted approach allowed the intervention to address literacy gaps more effectively and provide tailored support. However, despite these improvements, the revised process was still ineffective, relatively expensive and complicated, and did not fully achieve the intended outcomes in selecting the most suitable students for the intervention.

Key Findings

Literacy Catch-up Model (C/U)

Feasibility of the Intervention

The C/U Model (First Pilot) teachers reported difficulties managing large resource room sessions, which limited their ability to provide individualized attention to struggling readers, and reduced the intervention's effectiveness.

The C/U Model (Second Pilot) teachers capped class sizes at six students per session significantly improved their ability to focus on individual student needs, provide tailored support, and enhance student engagement. Observers also noted that smaller groups led to more effective teaching, increased participation, and better learning outcomes.

In the C/U Model (First Pilot) there was generally high attendance during teacher training and support, and most were successfully delivered.

During the C/U Model (Second Pilot), observers noted that the additional support provided through coaching and online meetings enhanced teachers' ability to manage their classrooms effectively. This support also enabled teachers to offer more individualized attention to students. As a result, even when faced with challenges related to varying literacy levels among students, teachers were able to maintain a high level of engagement and better support their students' learning needs.

Readiness for Future Trial

With regards to the Feasibility of a RCT the C/U model showed improved readiness for an RCT in the second pilot, due to several important refinements in teacher training, student selection, and classroom delivery (smaller class size). **While the model demonstrated some success in engaging students and improving student confidence, it still faced challenges.**

The recruitment and randomisation processes were successfully implemented, ensuring a well-balanced and unbiased sample, which strengthened the validity of the pilot findings. This execution contributed to acceptable retention rates, demonstrating that the intervention was able to maintain participant engagement throughout the study. These results suggest strong potential for scalability, as similar levels of involvement could likely be sustained in larger-scale implementations with appropriate strategies.

Key Findings

Literacy Catch-up Model (C/U)

Readiness for Future Trial

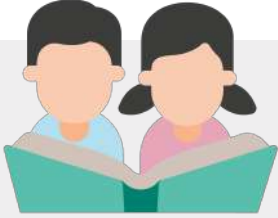
The outcome measures used in the second pilot were appropriate and feasible for assessing immediate literacy outcomes, but additional measures are needed to capture the broader impact of the intervention. Observations from Grade 2 and 3 students indicated psychosocial improvements, such as increased confidence and engagement, highlighting that the C/U model influences more than just academic achievement. Expanding outcome measures will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intervention's full effects.

The student selection process remains inconclusive and costly, indicating the need for significant changes to the screening process. This necessitates another pilot of a revised C/U model before moving ahead with an efficacy trial.

Overall, while showing promise in student engagement, the model needs further refinement and further piloting before it is tested in a larger RCT, such as:

- **Improved Student Selection Process:** the screening approach will need to be revised and made less complicated in identifying the students that are struggling with reading, it should also be uniformly implemented across all schools involved.
- **Stronger Parental Engagement:** Expand efforts beyond awareness meetings and WhatsApp messages to actively involve parents in supporting their children's learning.
- **Optimized Intervention Design:** Extend session duration, increase flexibility in scheduling, and introduce more varied activities to enhance student engagement and reduce teacher fatigue.
- **Refinement of Learning Materials:** consider differentiated practice books for varying literacy levels.

Key Findings



Success Story

This story was created by the communications team, using input gathered informally from resource room teachers, who were asked to share examples of students who had experienced a positive change as a result of the intervention. While this story may not be based on detailed technical data or extensive evidence, it provides a personal perspective into how the "LRF! program" made a difference for one child who participated in the second C/U pilot. Here's a look at her journey:

"It was nearly impossible for her to read anything, even a single word." – Participant's Father. A third-grade student once found it very difficult to read even simple words. Letters seemed confusing, and reading felt like a daunting task. This struggle with literacy affected her confidence and slowed her progress in other subjects, causing concern for her family.

Things started to improve when her school introduced additional reading support for students who were struggling, through the "LRF! program". With regular follow-up sessions and her family's ongoing support, some progress became noticeable. Her father observed, "This year, I've seen some improvement. She can now read words and sentences more easily. She even reads texts on TV." Her progress in reading also seemed to positively impact her performance in other subjects.

The support at home from her family continued, encouraged by the progress they saw. Her father remarked, "She's excited about the special room at school where they start teaching them to read as if they're in first grade. She's happy with the progress she's made."

The Way Forward

While the second C/U model pilot demonstrated meaningful improvements, particularly in teacher training, student engagement, and material refinement, it still fell short of the criteria needed for large-scale implementation. Persistent challenges, including student selection processes, session structure, and teacher workload, continued to limit its scalability and overall effectiveness.

On the other hand, the first pilot evaluation provided strong evidence of the W/C model's effectiveness, warranting its progression to a full-scale RCT. Below are the key takeaways from the two pilots that QRF and partners need to consider when planning for a W/C trial:

Key Considerations for W/C Randomised Trial Design

1. **Delivery:** Maintain structured literacy instruction through the "I do, We do, You do" approach to build student confidence and independence. Continue using the practice book as a reinforcement tool for literacy skills both in class and at home, including refinements to the practice book from the second C/U pilot to enhance instructional effectiveness and student engagement.
2. Preserve flexibility in lesson delivery to accommodate students with varying literacy levels, incorporating more flexibility, and introducing greater instructional variety to sustain engagement.
3. **Delivery Time:** Extending the delivery period or lengthening the LRF! sessions could help ensure sufficient time for content coverage and maximize student engagement and learning outcomes.
4. Provide coaching and classroom support to ensure implementation fidelity and help teachers refine their instructional strategies, including expanded teacher training, ongoing online coaching and PLC support from the second C/U pilot.
5. Sustain and strengthen parental engagement efforts through WhatsApp communication and active involvement in supporting literacy development.

The Way Forward

Key Considerations for W/C Randomised Trial Evaluation

1. **Recruitment:** Sustain rigorous recruitment and randomisation processes to uphold study validity and ensure balanced sample representation during the study. Regional disparities in receptivity to the intervention should be considered, with a particular focus on areas like Amman, where engagement may be lower. There was also the issue of contact information for the schools.
2. **Attrition:** To mitigate absenteeism, a strategy involving multiple rounds of EGRA testing should be implemented, ensuring that data collection is robust despite potential gaps in attendance. This approach will help maintain the integrity of results over time.
3. **Systematic Data Collection:** Ensuring consistent and systematic data collection on usual literacy practice in "business as usual" schools which would help contextualise impact evaluation findings.
4. **Outcome Measures:** To better assess the impact of the intervention, outcome measures could consider including both EGRA and pre-literacy scores. As far as Grade 1 is targeted, pre-literacy items should be incorporated to capture early developmental milestones.
5. **Longitudinal Follow-up:** A future trial would benefit from incorporating a longitudinal follow-up to assess the longer-term impact of the intervention on higher-level literacy outcomes, although funding limitations are a barrier. This would provide valuable insights into the sustainability of the gains and their influence on students' continued academic progress.

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