



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Program: Early Grade Reading Assessment Results: Cluster 1 Follow-Up 2

Has reading achievement increased as a result of the USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Program interventions? Early Grade Reading Assessment data collected for 4 Cluster 1 languages (Ateso, Leblango, Luganda and Runyankore-Rukiga) and English show increases in fundamental reading skills, significantly higher than increases found in control schools.

By the end of P2, learners in Program Schools could read more words and understand more of what they read than learners in control schools – this was true in all 4 Local Languages. Program learners could also read more words in English than learners in control schools.

The Early Grade Reading Assessment data presented here are from a randomized control trial which included 4,541 learners in program schools and 1,468 learners in control schools at the beginning of P1 in February, 2013 compared to 4,343 learners in program schools and 1,472 learners in control schools at the end of P2 in October, 2014¹.

These findings provide substantive evidence that the USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Program interventions are having a positive impact on reading achievement in program schools².



The magnitude of these results is amplified when considering the scope of the program: currently working in 12 local languages and English in 2,800 schools; the commitment to working through existing government of Uganda and Ministry of Education and Sports systems; and the low level of existing infrastructure in the typical Ugandan government primary schools

Local Language Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension: Improvements in Oral Reading Fluency (ORF or words per minute) in the local language were notable from baseline to follow-up and were significantly greater in treatment schools than control schools.

Figure 1 shows the percent of learners who could read at least 20 words per minute at the end of P2. At baseline, all language groups (treatment and control) started from a baseline of zero. In Ateso, the percent of learners reading 20 or more words a minute remained at 0 for learners in

¹ Oversight of the data collection process was provided by the Uganda National Examinations Board and NORC at the University of Chicago, an external evaluation contractor.

² In general, there was little significant difference between girls and boys – in those instances where significant differences were found, it was almost always the case of the girls outperforming the boys.

control schools, in program schools it increased to 2.8%. In Leblango, 4% of program learners could read 20+ words per minute, compared to 1.5% for control. In Luganda, 9% increase in control schools compares to 18% for program schools and for Runyankore-Rukiga, the percent of learners reading 20 or more words per minute increased to 16.4% compared to an increase of only 5.5% in control schools³. **In all 4 language groups, P2 learners in program schools were between 2 to 3 times more likely to read 20+ words per minute in the local language than P2 learners in control schools.**

Figure 1: % of Learners Reading 20 + Local Language words per minute Follow-up 2 (end of P2)

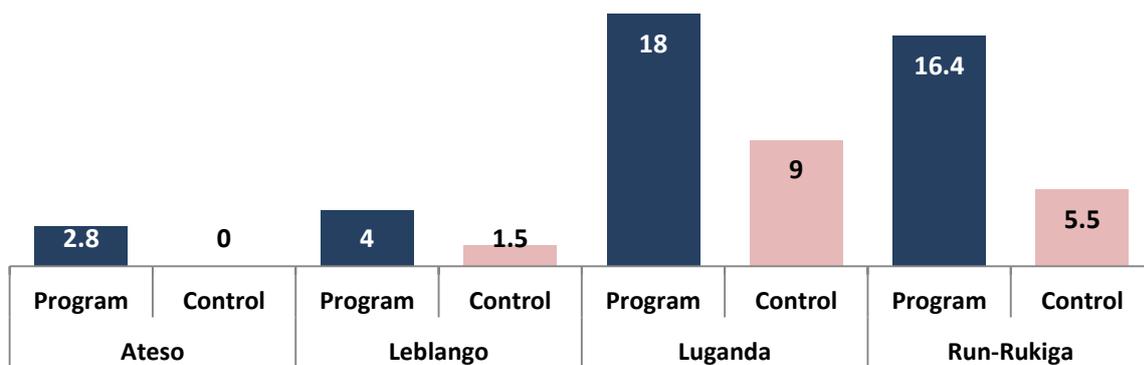
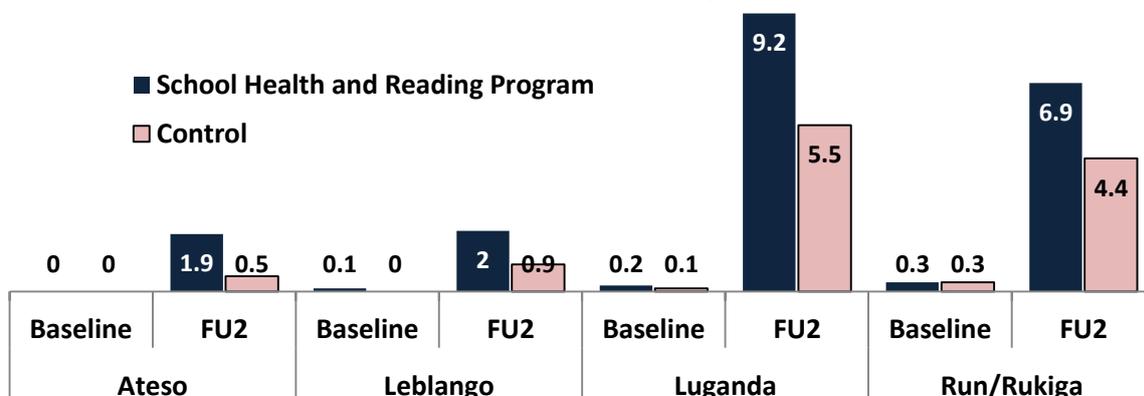


Figure 2 shows the increase in words read per minute or oral reading fluency. Where P1 learners could read no words in one minute in their local language at baseline, at the end of P2, they can now read between 2 and 10 words per minute in program schools compared to less than 1 to 5 words per minute in control schools. Luganda P2 program learners, for example, read 9.2 words per minute compared to only 5.5 words per minute among control learners.

Figure 2: Local Language Oral Reading Fluency (Words Per minute) Baseline (March, 2013) and Follow Up 2 (October, 2014)

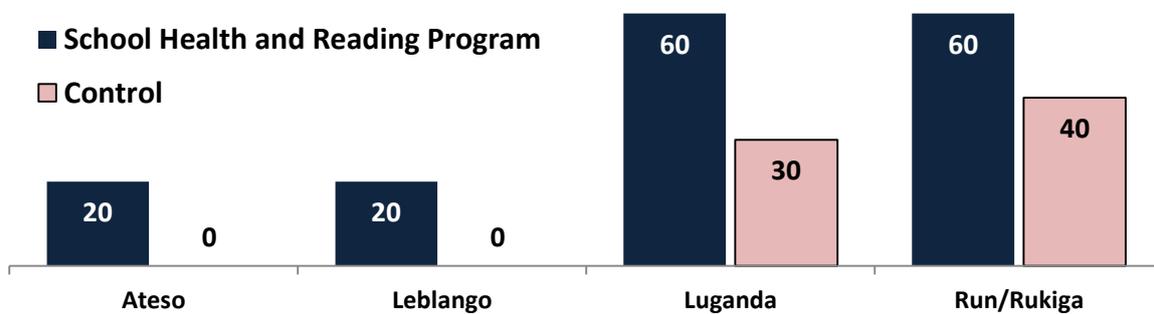


Learners need to read with fluency but they also need to be able to understand what they are reading. **Figure 3** shows the percent of the local language reading passage questions that learners were able to answer correctly at end of P2. At baseline (at the beginning of P1), no learners could answer a single question in either program or control schools. At the end of P2, that percent had

³ All of the differences between program and control schools are statistically significant ($p < .01$ in all languages with the exception of Leblango where $p = .06$).

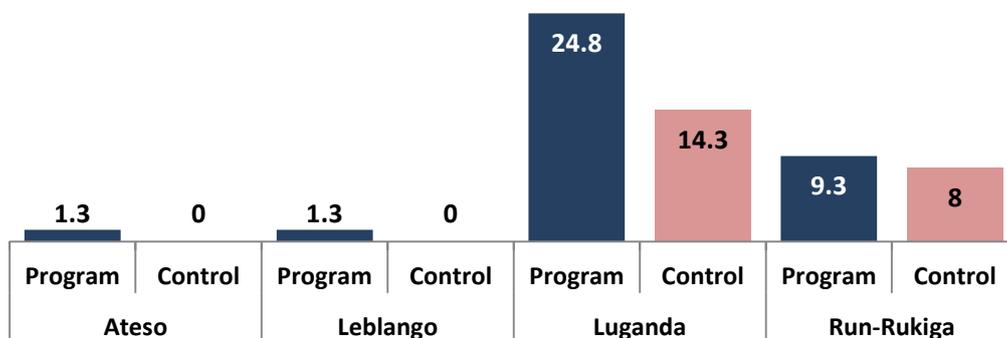
increased to between 20 and 60% in program schools: 20% in Ateso and Leblango (compared to 0 for control schools) and 60% in Luganda and Runyankore-Rukiga (compared to 30% and 40% in control schools).

Figure 3: % of Local Language Reading Passage Questions Answered Follow Up 2 (end of P2)



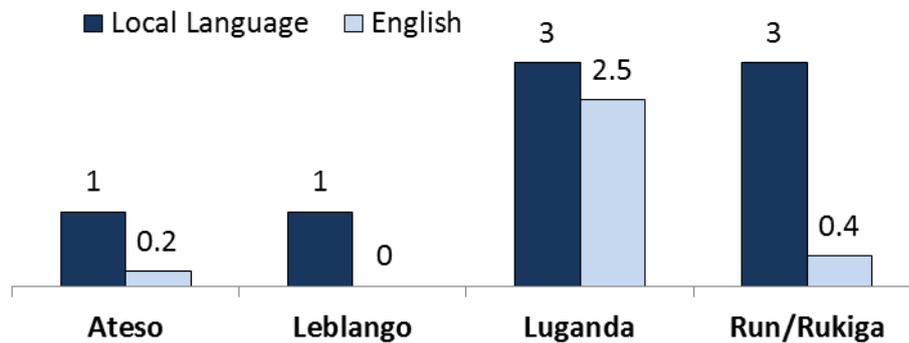
English Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension: Though the program follows the MoES thematic curriculum and teaches reading predominantly in the local language In P1-P3, significant differences in English reading achievement were found as well. While all groups started at zero at baseline, almost 25% of learners in Luganda speaking program schools could read 20+ WPM in English compared to only 14.3% in control schools. Ateso and Leblango have improved modestly at follow up to 1.3% of learners reading 20+ WPM compared to 0 for control schools. In Runyankore-Rukiga speaking schools, the gains were similar in program and control schools with 8-9% of learners reading 20 or more words per minute.

Figure 4: % of Learners Reading 20+ ENGLISH words per minute FU 2 (end of P2)



In Luganda speaking schools, learners are reading more words per minute in English than in Luganda – 24.8% of learners in Luganda speaking schools can read 20+ words per minute in English compared to 18% in Luganda. So While it appears that learners may be doing better in English than in Luganda, looking at reading comprehension (how much learners understand of what they read) as shown in **Figure 5**, tells a different story.

Figure 5: Average number of Reading Comprehension Questions Answered Correctly (out of 5) Program Schools End of P2



In all 4 local language groups, learners can answer more questions correctly in the local language than in English. This is even true among learners in Luganda speaking schools where learners could actually read more words in English – they understand more of what they have read in the local language.

Learners understand more of what they read in local language than in English

Changes in the way teachers are teaching reading: Data from classroom observations and teacher interviews also shows changes in reading instruction in the classroom. At baseline, no learners were observed reading from printed material. Imagine learning to read with no letters or words to follow with your finger, “reading” everything from the blackboard as your teacher points to the words or simply says them. **At follow-up, 88% of program P2 reading lessons observed found learners reading from print. Among control classrooms, none were reading from printed material at baseline or follow-up.**

Classroom observation data also show that teachers in program schools are more likely to have lesson plans that include appropriate reading methods – 69% of P2 program lessons compared to only 38% of control lessons. Findings in the area of support to teachers showed that teachers in program schools receive more support – 62% of program P2 teachers were observed teaching reading by a CCT once a term or more compared to 44% of control P2 teachers.

The Way Forward - Program Expansion through the MoES Global Partnership for Education: The USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Program is starting its 3rd year of implementation in schools in 2015 and will add more schools in 2016. The MoES scale-up of the program into an additional 27 districts through the Global Partnership for Education will also reach the schools in 2016. The Uganda National Examinations Board is currently planning its efforts to develop and conduct an oral, early grade reading assessment in the local language to ensure that improvement in reading results are being realized.