

A photograph of two young children, a girl and a boy, sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. They are both looking down at a book held by the boy. The girl is wearing a blue and white checkered jacket, and the boy is wearing a green jacket. They are in front of a wall made of mud-brick. In the background, there is a dirt path and some greenery.

BEYOND SCHOOL WALLS

A BOOST FOR READERS

Kids Failing to Read, Failing to Learn

WORLDWIDE

250

MILLION CHILDREN
of primary school age
CANNOT
READ OR WRITE,
whether they attend school or not.

250 MILLION=
10x all the children in elementary
school in the United States.



10X



WHO STRUGGLES THE MOST WITH READING?

KIDS LIVING IN POVERTY

Children from the poorest 20% of the population are 4x more likely to be out of school than their wealthier peers.



WEALTHIER



POOREST

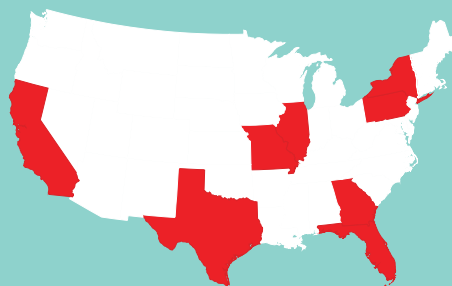


4X

GIRLS

More than **30 million girls** are out of school today.

That's equal to all the children in the 8 most populated U.S. states.



KIDS WITH NO BOOKS AT HOME



60%

In the United States, more than 60% of low-income families have no children's books in their homes.

Research shows that after grade 4, special catch-up reading classes are only successful with about **13%** of struggling students.

13%

Facing a Global Child Reading Crisis

Imagine going to school every day, but never learning your ABCs. Or picture yourself flipping through a book only to see pages full of symbols, unaware of their meaning or the stories they tell.

For more than a third of all primary-school age children around the world, that's a reality they face every day.¹ Even though more children are enrolled in school today than ever before, the fact remains that 250 million 5- to 12-year-olds cannot read or write, whether they are in school or not.²

Going to school isn't enough to ensure learning. And some children – those living in extreme poverty, girls and those with few books or no one to read to them at home – need an extra boost to gain basic reading skills. The gap in reading ability between strong and struggling readers widens with age. That's why it's critically important that children learn to read in the early grades, so that they can then read to learn.

1.UN Population Division, World Population Prospects 2006; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Data Centre.

2. UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA-GMR), Schooling for millions of children jeopardised by reductions in aid, UIS Factsheet No. 25, June 2013.

Each Saturday, Malati reads stories, draws pictures and learns new songs and words at a Save the Children-supported reading camp in her village in Nepal.



Learning to Read and Reading to Learn Through **Literacy Boost**

Save the Children is addressing the learning crisis worldwide through Literacy Boost, a program designed to help kids – especially the most vulnerable groups – stay in school and learn both inside and outside the classroom.

Literacy Boost improves children's reading skills by:

MEASURING KIDS' READING SKILLS to see how well they know their ABCs, sound out words and letters, and read and understand sentences.

TRAINING TEACHERS to help children crack the code of reading, keep students engaged and interested in reading books, and use games, songs and stories in literacy lessons.

GETTING COMMUNITIES INVOLVED in learning by providing books, libraries and supplies; sponsoring camps, “reading buddies,” and other learning activities; and organizing workshops to help parents support their children's learning and to create books with locally available materials.

Children participating in Literacy Boost around the world are making significant progress in reading – advancing from learning to read to reading to learn.

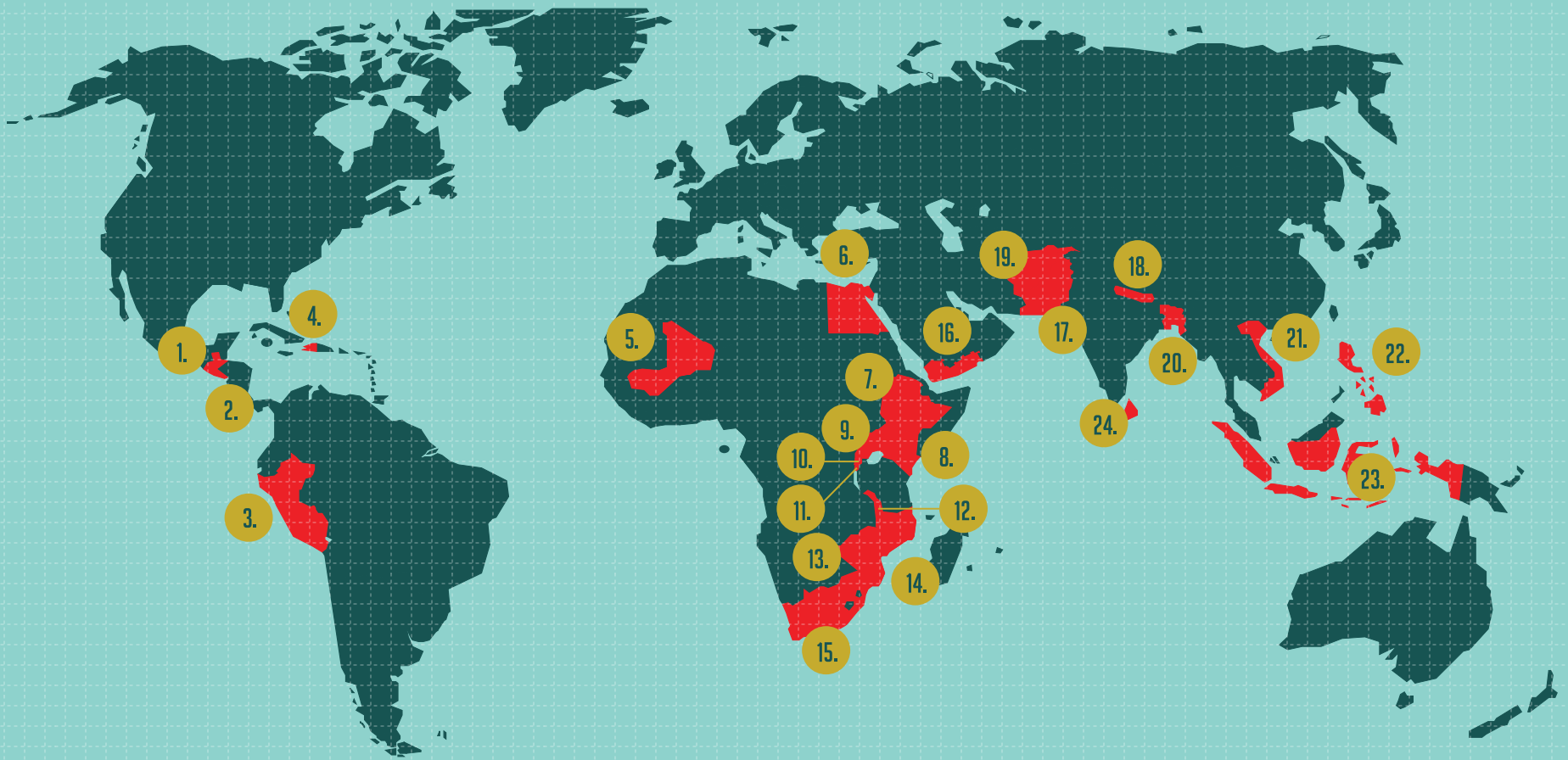


ABOVE: Community volunteers get creative using handmade letters and learning materials at a Save the Children Literacy Boost reading camp in Ethiopia.



LEFT: Save the Children trains teachers like Mulu to support her third-grade students in Boda village, Ethiopia to learn how to read.

Where in the World Is Literacy Boost?



1. Guatemala
2. El Salvador
3. Peru
4. Haiti

5. Mali
6. Egypt
7. Ethiopia
8. Kenya

9. Uganda
10. Rwanda
11. Burundi
12. Malawi

13. Zimbabwe
14. Mozambique
15. South Africa
16. Yemen

17. Pakistan
18. Nepal
19. Afghanistan
20. Bangladesh

21. Vietnam
22. Philippines
23. Indonesia
24. Sri Lanka



READERS POOR IN NECESSITIES, RICH IN LEARNING

Literacy Boost is helping students living in extreme poverty to stay in school. More importantly, Literacy Boost is helping children most affected by poverty, especially girls, to learn more of the basics – reading letters and words – than students living in extreme poverty who are not enrolled in the program.



LEFT: Literacy Boost community reading buddy activities helped Shoaib, 7, overcome his fears of school and learn to read with confidence in Pakistan.

RIGHT: Sita, 10, reads at home with books borrowed from a Literacy Boost mobile library in her village in rural Nepal.

STUDENT PROFILE:

Budding Book Borrower Sita

“My favorite book is *Chootera Moote (Short and Fat)*, said Sita, age 10, sitting cross-legged in her classroom with a book on her lap. “It’s a story about two mice. One who lives in the country and one who lives in the city,” she explained. “The differences between life in the city and life in the country are very interesting.”

Sita lives in Budhathok village, a small farming community in Baglung district, Nepal – a remote place of hills, rivers and fertile plains. The nearest town market is more than 90 minutes journey by car on rough, one-lane roads carved into the rugged terrain. Parents work long hours to provide for their families and look to their children to help with chores. For many families struggling to make ends meet, books and time for reading are a luxury they often can’t afford.

Without books at home or access to libraries, children have few opportunities to grow as readers. The only books Sita had at home were her school textbooks, and most of her time outside of the classroom was spent helping her mom around the house.

Knowing the importance of practicing reading at home, Save the Children brought a mobile library to Sita’s village through the Literacy Boost program. Now Sita and her younger sister Tej, age 9, look forward to selecting stories from a trunk full of books and taking them home. They can borrow a new book every Saturday.

“I have read many stories from the book trunk,” Sita said. “I want to take a new story book every week.”

Sita reads at night after she and Tej have finished collecting firewood and finding food for their family’s goat. “I like reading stories!” she said. “I can read fast now, and I can also remember new words from the books.”



PHOTOS: Left, Save the Children; Right, Sanjana Shrestha



KIDS IN POVERTY

GETTING AN A FOR ATTENDANCE

In **Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Pakistan**, Literacy Boost students living in extreme poverty are more likely to stay in school than their impoverished peers who are not attending Literacy Boost.

Poorest Literacy Boost students more likely to stay in school:

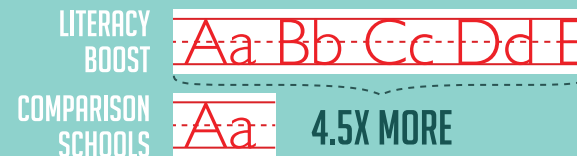


LEARNING THE ABCs

In **Pakistan**, impoverished girls in Literacy Boost schools learned 2.5x more letters than impoverished girls in comparison schools.



In **Nepal**, impoverished girls in Literacy Boost schools learned 4.5x more letters than impoverished girls in comparison schools.



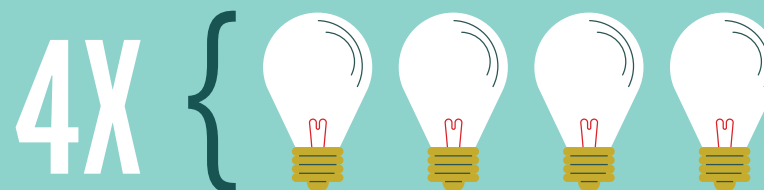
BECOMING A WORD WHIZ

Literacy Boost helped the most poverty-stricken children in **Malawi and Zimbabwe** learn 2x as many words as students in other schools who were also living in poverty.



CONNECTING THE DOTS

In **Pakistan**, Literacy Boost helped children living in poverty improve their reading comprehension scores by more than 4x as much as students living in poverty who did not attend Literacy Boost.





GIRLS GAINING GROUND IN READING

Literacy Boost is keeping girls in school. It also is helping them learn more letters, read more words and sentences and understand their meaning.

In Pakistan and Zimbabwe, girls started Literacy Boost with much lower scores in reading words correctly than girls from other schools. But in just one year, the program has helped these girls catch up and move ahead of girls not in the program. The gains in reading words correctly are evident whether children are reading in their native language or in the language used at school.



LEFT: Girls participating in Literacy Boost in Pakistan learn in and outside of the classroom through school activities and reading camps.

BELOW: Tatenda, 8, Chipo, 9, and Trish, 8, share a story book during class at Matau Primary School in Zimbabwe.





GETTING AN A FOR ATTENDANCE

ETHIOPIA

Girls participating in Literacy Boost are 43% more likely to stay in school than their peers in schools without the program.

43%

MORE
LIKELY



ZIMBABWE

Girls participating in Literacy Boost are 33% more likely to stay in school than their peers in schools without the program.

33%

MORE
LIKELY



LEARNING THE ABCs

NEPAL

Girls attending Literacy Boost learned 2.5x more letters of the alphabet than female students who did not attend the program.

LITERACY
BOOST
COMPARISON
SCHOOLS

Aa Bb Cc

Aa

2.5X MORE

PAKISTAN

Girls attending Literacy Boost learned 6.5x more letters of the alphabet than female students who did not attend the program.

LITERACY
BOOST
COMPARISON
SCHOOLS

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg

Aa

6.5X MORE



GIRLS LEARNING

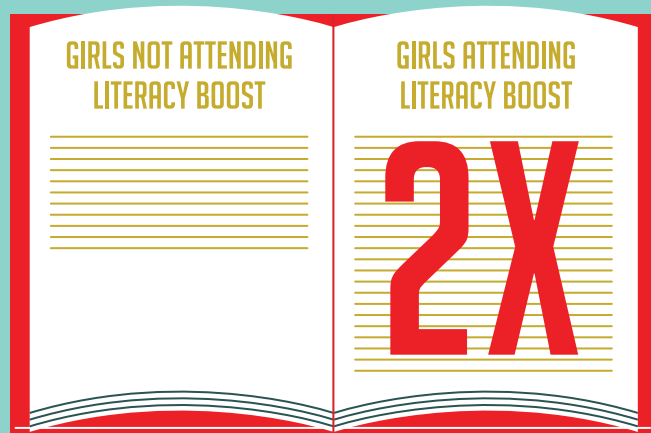
READING IT RIGHT

PROGRESS IN READING WORDS AND SENTENCES CORRECTLY:

PAKISTAN

URDU:

Language used in the classroom

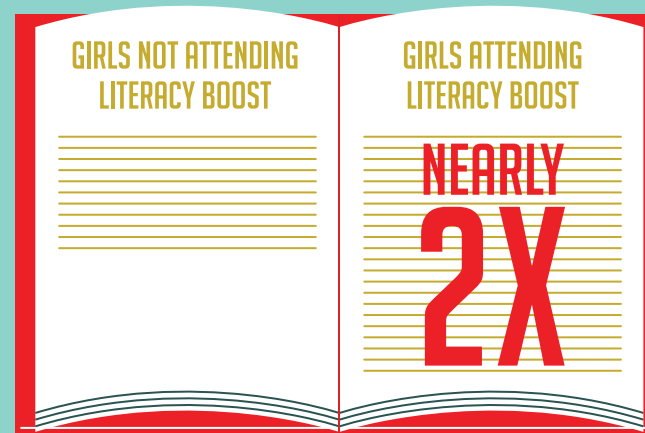


Girls in Literacy Boost made 2x as much progress in reading words and sentences correctly in Urdu compared to girls not in Literacy Boost, and ended the year with overall scores higher than their female peers.

ZIMBABWE

SHONA:

Language used at home and in the classroom



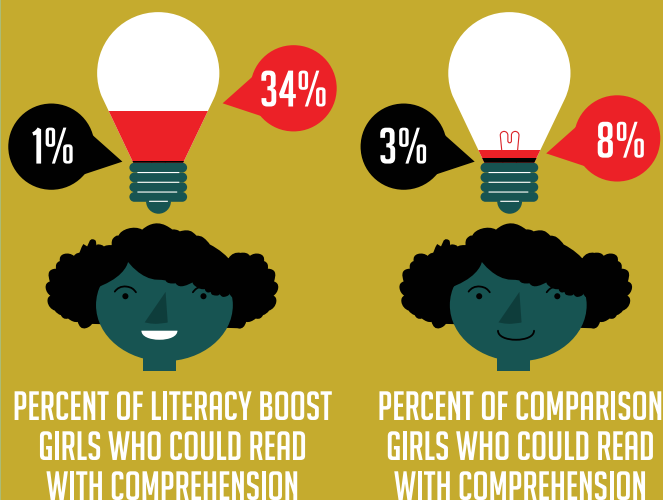
Girls in Literacy Boost made nearly 2x as much progress in reading words and sentences in Shona correctly compared to girls not in Literacy Boost.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

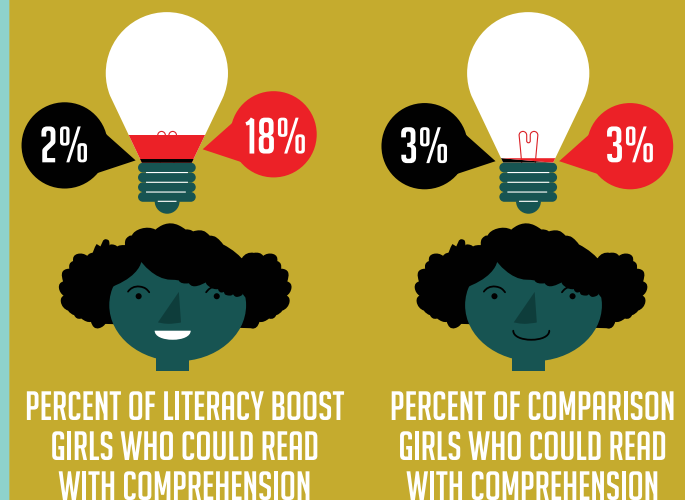
In **Pakistan** and **Zimbabwe**, girls in Literacy Boost are making greater progress toward reading with comprehension than girls in comparison schools.

- BEGINNING OF THE YEAR
- END OF THE YEAR

PAKISTAN



ZIMBABWE



STUDENT PROFILE:

Incredible Patience

“School is fun!” said 11-year-old Patience, a primary school student in Kachamaenza in rural Zimbabwe. “I can now read things that I couldn’t read before.” Just a year ago, Patience could not read or write a meaningful sentence, but now, reading is opening up her world and taking her imagination to places beyond her village of dusty roads, thatched huts and the daily chores of cooking, washing and fetching water.

“I read that in the past people used to light a fire or beat drums as a way of passing information,” said Patience. “I also read that now people pass information by using the radio, newspapers and television.”

Patience’s teacher, Grace, trained in better classroom techniques through Literacy Boost, made a difference. “My teacher was very patient with me,” said Patience. “She would call me and say ‘Come, let me teach you how to read.’ That is when I learned to read.”

Patience also practiced her reading in Shona, a local language, and English at after-school reading camps and with her reading buddy. “I have improved my English reading, but I do get a few new and difficult words that I do not know,” she said. “Recently I encountered the words ‘completely’ and ‘quietly’ and I didn’t know these words. I had to ask the reading camp mentor for assistance. I couldn’t read or write the word ‘picture.’ Now I can.”

Patience has come a long way from the quiet student she once was. She is now more involved in class activities, reading aloud to classmates, writing letters in English and sharing her books with her mother at home. These days, she is drumming up support for reading throughout her village.



With the support of her teacher, Grace Tsiga, Literacy Boost student Patience, 11, can now read with comprehension in both her native Shona language and English.



KIDS WITH NO
BOOKS AT HOME

CREATING READERS IN A WORLD WITH NO BOOKS

Literacy Boost is helping children from homes with few, if any, books or readers stay in school. In addition, the program is helping these children overcome reading difficulties. In just one year of Literacy Boost, students were able to read more words, read with accuracy, and understand better what they read – compared to similarly disadvantaged children not in the program.



ABOVE: Grandfather Makuram Dangaura, 55, reads with his granddaughter Radhika, 9, outside their home in Rajipur village, Nepal.

LEFT: Tereza, 11, practices identifying letters with Literacy Boost reading camp leader, Clement Elasoni, during a session at Chigwenembe reading camp in Malawi.



I Can't Read, but I Can Still Coach My Child

"I never could have thought it possible to be my granddaughter's reading buddy. I cannot read and write, but my grandchildren have become my reading buddies, giving me the eyes I need, the feel for words that I never knew I had," said a grandmother in Zimbabwe.

"Even if we are not literate ourselves, we can help our children so that they can read and study well. It is important that our children know how to read so they can be self-sufficient, so that they can have a better life than us," said a mother of a Literacy Boost student in Pakistan.

"My daughter could not read and write and died leaving orphans under my care. Now they can read at home and I get to participate in their reading. It has never been heard of until [Literacy Boost and the] Matau Project. It's a miracle," said a grandmother in Zimbabwe.



KIDS WITH NO
BOOKS AT HOME

GETTING AN A FOR ATTENDANCE

Students from homes with few books attending Literacy Boost are more likely to stay in school than their peers not in the program.

In **Ethiopia**, students from homes with few books attending Literacy Boost are 27% more likely to stay in school than students not in the program.

27%
ETHIOPIA



In **Zimbabwe**, students from homes with few books attending Literacy Boost are 48% more likely to stay in school than students not in the program.

48%
ZIMBABWE



BECOMING A WORD WHIZ

At the beginning of the year, Literacy Boost students in **Ethiopia** and **Zimbabwe** with the fewest reading materials at home were unable to read as many words as their peers.

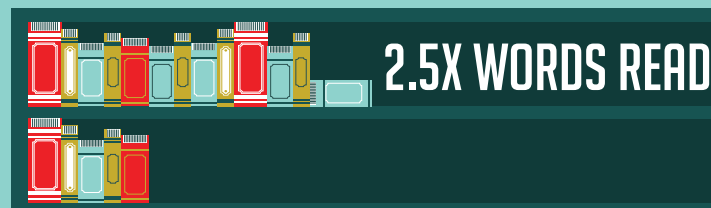
By the end of the year, Literacy Boost students in these countries made more than 2x as much progress in reading words compared to similarly disadvantaged children not in Literacy Boost.



Literacy Boost students ended the year with higher overall word-reading scores.

ETHIOPIA

Literacy Boost students made 2.5x as much progress in reading words than their peers not attending Literacy Boost.



At the end of the year, they can read
85% OF WORDS.

ZIMBABWE

Literacy Boost students more than doubled their word-reading ability over the course of the year.





**KIDS WITH NO
BOOKS AT HOME**

READING IT RIGHT

PROGRESS IN READING WORDS AND SENTENCES CORRECTLY:

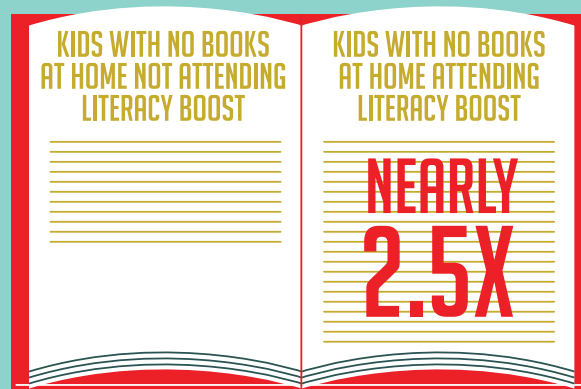
At the beginning of the year, Literacy Boost students in **Zimbabwe** and **Pakistan** were unable to read as many words and sentences correctly as their peers in other schools.

By year's end, Literacy Boost students had not only caught up, but often moved ahead of their peers — reading more words and sentences correctly overall.

ZIMBABWE

Literacy Boost students made nearly 2.5x as much progress in reading words and sentences correctly compared to their peers not in Literacy Boost.

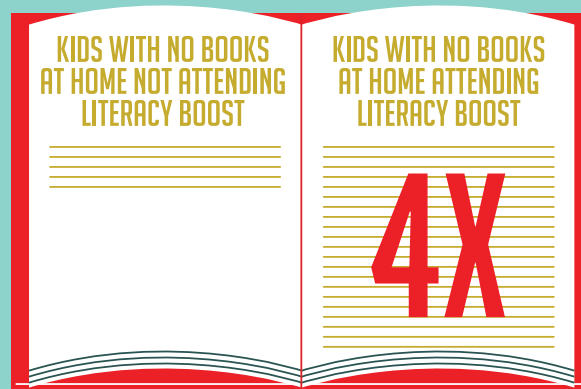
Literacy Boost students ended the year with overall higher scores.



PAKISTAN

Literacy Boost students quadrupled the number of words and sentences they could read correctly by the end of the year.

Literacy Boost students ended the year with overall scores even with their peers.

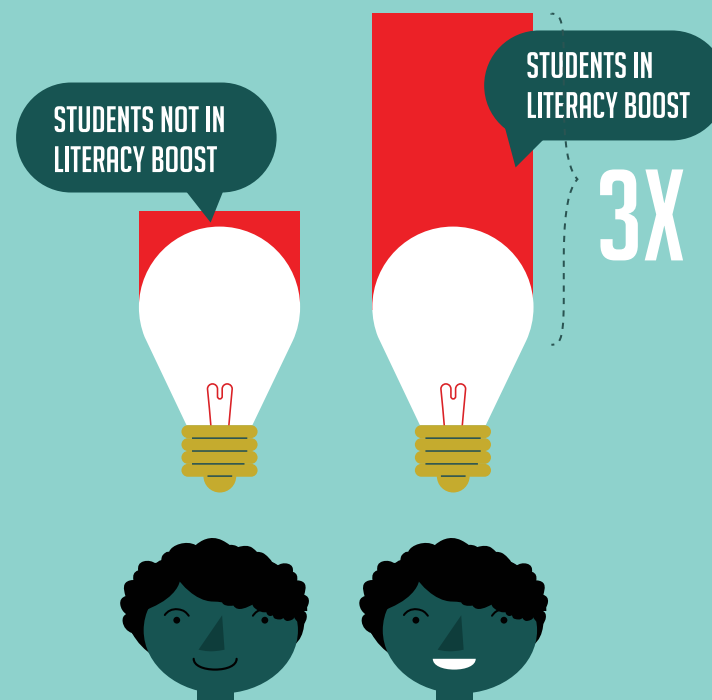


CONNECTING THE DOTS

Literacy Boost students in **Pakistan** and **Malawi** with the fewest reading resources at home made significant progress in reading with comprehension.

PAKISTAN AND MALAWI

Literacy Boost students made 3x as much progress in understanding what they read as their peers not in Literacy Boost.



STUDENT PROFILE:

Big Brother Kuma, Hooked on Books

Walking down a dirt lane in the village of Necho, Ethiopia, you won't hear a school bell ringing, but you will hear birds chirping and goats bleating. On Saturdays, you will hear the infectious sounds of children reading, singing and clapping during a Literacy Boost reading camp, a weekly community activity designed to help children practice reading outside of school and make reading fun.

For Kuma, age 10, this is the best part of his week. Along with nearly 60 other children, many of whom have few books at home, Kuma comes to the weekly reading camp held under the trees in a neighbor's yard, to sing songs, practice his ABCs and read books in Afaan Oromo, the local language.

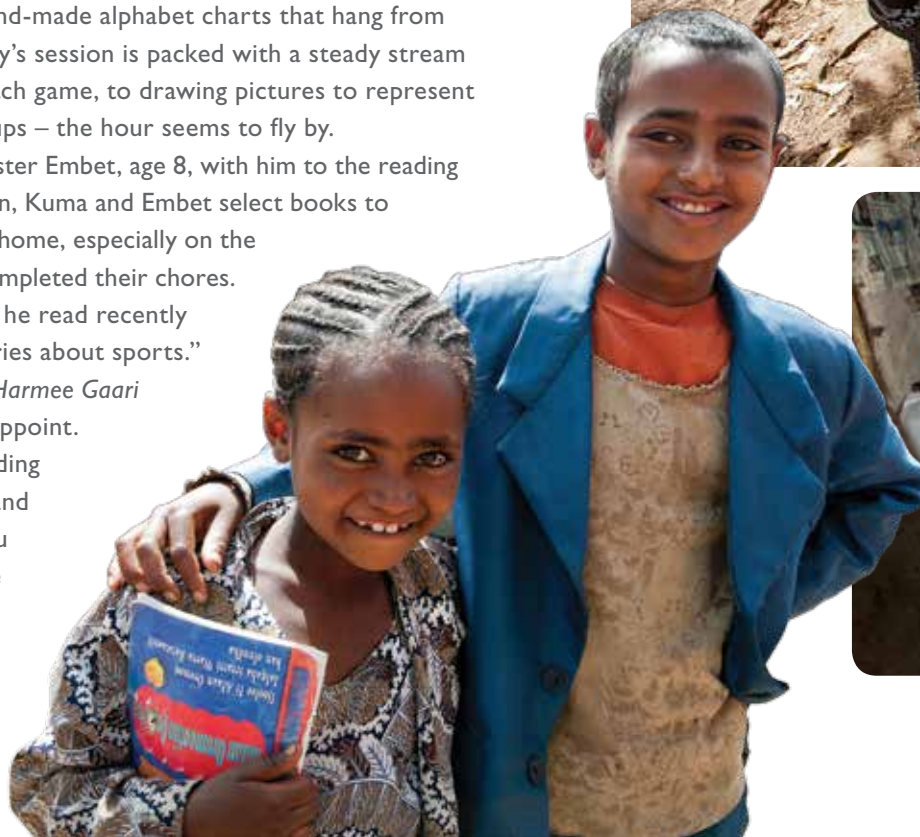
A bright-eyed boy who enjoys school and reading, Kuma takes in everything around him – letters of the alphabet made from straw, twisted wire and paper, and hand-made alphabet charts that hang from branches of nearby trees. Today's session is packed with a steady stream of activities – from a letter match game, to drawing pictures to represent letters, to reading in small groups – the hour seems to fly by.

Kuma often brings his little sister Embet, age 8, with him to the reading camp. At the end of each session, Kuma and Embet select books to borrow and practice reading at home, especially on the weekend and after they have completed their chores.

Kuma chatters about a story he read recently and says "I like books with stories about sports."

His book selection this week, *Harmee Gaari* (*The Good Mother*), will not disappoint.

Thanks to Literacy Boost's reading camps and book banks, Kuma and Embet have discovered that you don't have to go far from home to find a good book to read.



On their way home from the Literacy Boost reading camp in Necho, Ethiopia, Kuma, 10, and Embet, 8, flip through books they borrowed from the mobile library.



Save the Children has an ambitious global vision: that all children can read by the time they leave primary school. Together, we can open a world of learning to children, giving them a greater chance to reach their full potential.

METHODOLOGY

In spring 2013, Save the Children carried out a cross-country analysis of the impact of Literacy Boost. Collecting data from seven countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan and Zimbabwe) over the first year of the program, Save the Children performed multivariate analyses of learning gains looking at three measures of equity: gender, socioeconomic status and home literacy environment. Each analysis considers baseline scores, age and measures of equity when evaluating the improvements in children's reading skills.

The initial data was collected in Bangladesh (2012 to 2013), Ethiopia (2011 to 2012), Malawi (2009), Mozambique (2009 to 2010), Nepal (2009 to 2010), Pakistan (2009 to 2010) and Zimbabwe (2012).

Save Children surveyed 1,650 students enrolled in Literacy Boost and in comparison schools not participating in the program, and looked at reading scores, socioeconomic status, home literacy environment, sex and age. The schools for the study were selected by Save the Children field staff and Ministry of Education partners and assigned to Literacy Boost or comparison groups. Students from these schools were randomly selected for participation in an initial assessment, and the same students were re-assessed at the end of the school year.

Literacy Boost and comparison groups in this analysis are similar across relevant, measurable characteristics at baseline (e.g. background characteristics, literacy skills, socioeconomic status, home literacy environment, etc.) and no baseline reading scores presented are significantly different. All differences in gains between Literacy Boost and comparison groups are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

END NOTES

1. Kids Failing to Read, Failing to Learn infographic, page 1 – 250 million. UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA-GMR), *Schooling for millions of children jeopardised by reductions in aid*, UIS Factsheet No. 25, June 2013. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs-25-out-of-school-children-en.pdf> ChildStats.Gov Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*, 2013, Child Population, Table POP1. <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables.asp> accessed 5 August 2013
2. Kids Failing to Read, Failing to Learn infographic, page 1 – four times more likely to be out of school. UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA-GMR), *Schooling for millions of children jeopardised by reductions in aid*, UIS Factsheet No. 25, June 2013. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs-25-out-of-school-children-en.pdf>
3. Kids Failing to Read, Failing to Learn infographic, page 1 – 30 million girls. Children's Defense Fund, *Children in the States Factsheets 2013*. <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/state-data-repository/children-in-the-states.html>
4. Kids Failing to Read, Failing to Learn infographic, page 1 – 60 percent of low-income families. McQuillan, Jeff. *The Literacy Crisis*. California State University, 1998.
5. Kids Failing to Read, Failing to Learn infographic, page 1 – 13 percent of struggling readers. Wren, Sebastian. "Matthew Effects in Reading." <http://www.balancedreading.com/matthew.html> accessed 5 August 2013.

Spread the Word! Get Involved: go to www.savethechildren.org/LiteracyBoost

ABOVE: Save the Children's reading camp activities bring communities, like Rajipur village in Nepal, together to practice and celebrate the joy of reading.

ON THE COVER: Abebe, 12, is a reading buddy to his younger brother Kebenu, 10, through Save the Children's Literacy Boost program in Ethiopia.

Photos by Susan Warner

