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# UGANDA PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT EVALUATION FOR LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT AND RETENTION ACTIVITY (LARA) MIDTERM IMPACT AND FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT

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Literacy Hour in P2 Classroom, Ugandan Primary School; by Alicia Menendez

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## ACRONYMS

CI, C2	Cluster 1, Cluster 2
CAM	Continuous Assessment Monitoring
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interview
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCT	Coordinating Center Tutors
CDO	Community Development Officer
CRO	Classroom Observations
CSR	Center for Social Research
DEO	District Education Officer
DPSWO	District Probation and Social Welfare Officers
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
COP	Chief of Party
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FA	Field Assistants
FGD	Contracting Officer Representative
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IE	Impact Evaluation
IP	Implementing Partner
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LARA	Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity
LC	Local Councils
LOE	Level of Effort
MDES	Minimum Detectable Effect Size
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development
NORC	NORC at the University of Chicago
ORF	Oral Reading Fluency
PI, P2, P3, P4, P6	Primary 1, Primary 2, Primary 3, Primary 4, Primary 6
P&IE	Performance and Impact Evaluation

PE	Performance Evaluation
PTC	Primary Teacher Colleges
RI, R2	Result 1, Result 2
RCT	Randomized Controlled Trial
R&A	Retention and Attendance
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
RTRR	Reporting, Tracking, Referral, Response
RWI	Research World International
SBCC	Social Behavior Change Communication
SCA	School Change Agreement
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SHRP	School Health and Reading Program
SRGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
STS	School-to-School
T1, T2	Treatment 1, Treatment 2
TASO	The AIDS Support Organization
TG	Teacher Guides
ToT	Training of Teachers
ULC	Uganda Learning/Literacy Campaign
UKU	Uganda Kids Unite
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VACiS	Violence Against Children in Schools
VCCMC	Village Child Case Management Committees

## GLOSSARY

**Baseline.** A survey to collect data prior to the start of the intervention.

**Beneficiary or beneficiaries.** Beneficiaries are the individuals, households, firms, facilities, villages or similar that are exposed to an intervention with beneficial intentions.

**Cluster sample.** A multi-stage sample design, in which a sample is first drawn of geographical areas (e.g. sub-districts or villages), and then a sample of households, firms, or facilities is drawn from within the selected districts. The design results in larger standard errors than would occur in a simple random sample, but is often used to minimize cost.

**Comparison Group.** A group of individuals whose characteristics are similar to those of the treatment groups (or participants) but who do not receive the intervention. The comparison group is called a control group when the evaluator can ensure, under trial conditions, that no confounding factors affect it.

**Confidence interval (CI).** A range of values around a value measured from a sample that reveals how precisely the sample value reflects the population value. A larger confidence interval reflects lower precision. For example, if the average age of a sample is 36, then a smaller confidence interval (from 35 to 37) suggests that the sample average age is likely a more precise estimate of the population average age than if the confidence interval were larger (ranging from 34 to 38, for example).

**Confidence level.** The level of certainty that the true value of impact (or any other statistical estimate) will be included within a specified range.

**Control Group.** A special case of the comparison group, in which the evaluator can control the environment and so limit confounding factors.

**Counterfactual.** The state of the world in the absence of the intervention. For most impact evaluations, the counterfactual is the value of the outcome for the treatment group in the absence of the intervention. However, studies should also pay attention to unintended outcomes, including effects on non-beneficiaries.

**Convenience sample.** Also known as reliance on available subjects, a convenience sample is a nonprobability sample that relies on data collection from population members who are easy to reach (or conveniently available). This method does not allow for generalizations and is of limited value in social science research.

**Effect Size.** The size of the relationship between two variables (particularly between program variables and outcomes). See also “Minimum detectable effect .”

**Experimental Design.** See “Randomized Control Trial.”

**Fidelity of Implementation.** The degree to which an intervention or program is delivered as designed.

**Impact.** How an intervention alters the state of the world. Impact evaluations typically focus on the effect of the intervention on the outcome for the beneficiary population.

**Impact evaluation.** A study of the attribution of changes in the outcome to the intervention. Impact evaluations have either an experimental or quasi-experimental design.

**Intervention** The project, program, or policy that is the subject of the impact evaluation.

**Intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC).** This is a descriptive statistic that is used when data are clustered into groups. The statistic ranges from 0 and 1 and measures how closely members of a group resemble each other in certain observable characteristics. ICCs can also be used to gauge the consistency of measurement across observers. Large impact evaluation studies applying statistical means to construct a counterfactual require a sufficiently large sample size (n) to ensure statistical power.

**Minimum detectable effect.** The smallest effect size the researcher deems necessary to detect in the impact evaluation. Used to perform the power calculation necessary to determine the required sample size.

**Mixed methods.** The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in an impact evaluation design. Sometimes called Q-squared or Q2.

**Outcome.** A variable, or variables, that measure the impact of the intervention.

**Power.** The ability of a study to detect an impact. Conducting a power calculation is a crucial step in impact evaluation design,

**Power calculation.** A calculation of the sample required for the impact evaluation, which depends on the minimum effect size and the required level of confidence.

**Purposive sample.** A form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study

**Random assignment.** An intervention design in which members of the eligible population are assigned at random to either the treatment group or the control group. That is, whether someone is in the treatment or control group is solely a matter of chance, and not a function of any of their characteristics (either observed or unobserved).

**Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT).** An impact evaluation design in which random assignment has been used to allocate the intervention amongst members of the eligible population. Since there should be no correlation between participant characteristics and the outcome, and differences in outcome between the treatment and control can be fully attributed to the intervention, i.e. there is no selection bias. However, RCTs may be subject to several types of bias and therefore need to follow strict protocols. Also called “Experimental design.”

**Sample.** A subset of the population being studied. The sample is drawn randomly from the sampling frame. In a simple, random sample, all elements in the frame are equally likely to be selected, but usually, more complex sampling designs are used, requiring the use of sample weights in analysis.

**Sampling frame.** The complete list of the population of interest in the study. This is not necessarily the whole population of the country or area being studied, but rather is restricted to the eligible population, e.g. grade 3 teachers in public schools. For a school survey, the sampling frame would be all schools in the area of study.

**Secondary data.** Data that has been collected for another purpose, but may be reanalyzed in a subsequent study.

**Standard deviation.** A measure of the amount of variation or dispersion in a set of values. A low standard deviation indicates that the values tend to be close to the mean of the set, while a high standard deviation indicates that the values are spread over a wider range.

**Statistical power.** The probability that a study will find a treatment effect given that there is a treatment effect to be detected.

**Statistical significance.** The likelihood that a treatment effect found in a study is not a result of chance. A higher statistical significance indicates a higher likelihood that the observed treatment effect is not the result of chance.

**Survey.** The collection of information using (1) a pre-defined sampling strategy, and (2) a survey instrument. A survey may collect data from individuals, households, or other units such as schools or hospitals.

**Survey instrument.** A pre-designed form (questionnaire) used to collect data during a survey.

**Theory of change.** Laying out the underlying causal chain linking inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, and identifying the assumptions required if the intervention is to be successful. A theory of change is the starting point for theory-based impact evaluation.

**Treatment group.** The group of people, firms, or facilities who receive the intervention. Also called participants or beneficiaries.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## EVALUATION PURPOSE

NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC), in partnership with subcontractor Panagora Group, serves as the independent evaluator for the Performance and Impact Evaluation (P&IE) of the Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA), implemented by RTI International (RTI), in Uganda. LARA is a 6-year (April 2015–April 2021)<sup>1</sup> USAID-funded activity designed to support the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in its efforts to improve early grade reading (EGR) and retention.

LARA concentrates on two results: Result 1 (R1) improved capacity to deliver early grade reading in three local languages<sup>2</sup> and English; and Result 2 (R2) improved retention in early primary grades, through the reduction of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) resulting in safer school environments. Both results are intended to contribute to the overall objective of improving reading skills.

The Uganda LARA P&IE activity (April 2016 - April 2021) has two objectives 1) To assess the impact of LARA on learners' literacy skills and retention rates; and 2) To assess the performance of LARA in terms of project management, learning, design, implementation, results, and sustainability.

There are two clusters of schools where LARA activities take place. Cluster 1 (C1) schools started receiving the intervention in 2015-2016 prior to the start of this evaluation. The focus of NORC's evaluation is Cluster 2 (C2) schools that LARA only reached in 2017 after NORC had collected baseline data. NORC's LARA P&IE covers C2 schools located in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga language areas.

The LARA P&IE consists of two components: (1) an Impact Evaluation (IE), and (2) a Performance Evaluation (PE). The IE addresses the following questions:

- What is the impact of R1 activities on reading performance and retention rates?
- What is the additional impact of R2 activities on reading performance and what is the impact of R2 activities on SRGBV intermediate outcomes?
- What is the total impact that R1 + R2 activities have on reading performance and retention rates?

The purpose of the PE is to provide insights into LARA program implementation and the IE results. Thus, the PE focuses on the following questions:

- Is LARA on track to achieve results by the end of the project?
- What are the key outcomes of the project?
- Were activities carried out as planned?
- Are activities sufficient and relevant to achieving Result 1 and Result 2?
- What factors accelerated or inhibited the achievement of LARA results?

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<sup>1</sup> LARA was originally conceived as a 5-year activity, but it was extended for a sixth year.

<sup>2</sup> The three local languages are Luganda, Runyankore-Rukiga and Runyoro-Rutooro. Since there was only one district with three CCTs that predominately used the Runyoro-Rutooro languages, and therefore insufficient sample size, NORC's evaluation is restricted to the 12 districts dominated by Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga.

## LARA BACKGROUND

LARA aims to improve the reading skills of 1.3 million primary-grade learners in government schools in 31 districts throughout Uganda. LARA has two main goals:

**R1 (Increased capacity to deliver early grade reading)** focuses on strengthening the capacity of MoES and other educational stakeholders to deliver EGR in three local languages in Primary 1 (P1) to Primary 3 (P3) with a transition to English in Primary 4 (P4). The R1 main activities of LARA are:

- Teacher training in EGR methodology
- Continuous assessment monitoring (CAM)
- Distribution of teaching and learning materials and supplemental reading materials
- Teacher support supervision
- Uganda Learning/Literacy Campaign (ULC)

**R2 (Improved retention in primary grades)** endeavors to further improve children’s retention and active participation in early primary grades (P1–P4) through the reduction of SRGBV, resulting in the establishment of a positive and supportive school climate for learning. The main activities are:

- Journeys training and materials.
- Uganda Kids Unite (UKU)
- Community subgrants
- SRGBV-related social behavior change campaign (SBCC)
- National support for the implementation of Uganda’s National Child Policy (2017–2022)

## EVALUATION DESIGN, DATA COLLECTION, AND SAMPLES

The LARA P&IE uses a mixed-methods approach combining a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design and qualitative methods. Randomization of treatment assignment was conducted at the Coordinating Center Tutors (CCT) level, assigning all schools under a CCT to one of three arms: treatment T1 (receiving R1 EGR activities only), treatment T2 (receiving R1 EGR and R2 SRGBV activities), or the control group (receiving no activities). Within each CCT, schools were randomly selected for data collection at baseline (in 2017). The same schools were visited in 2019 for the midline data collection, with EGR and SRGBV data collected between July and October 2019 respectively. The PE qualitative data was collected in March 2020.

The IE also estimates the effect of the R1 and R2 activities on learner attendance, a major predictor of dropout and grade repetition. Every school term, NORC checks the retention and attendance (R&A) of just over 3,500 learners who were selected at baseline from 71 schools when they were in P1 and P4. We conducted classroom observations (CROs) during unannounced visits in term 3 of each school year to assess the fidelity of implementation of the EGR activities and compare teaching practices of 30 treatment and control schools. The table below lists all data collection efforts conducted by the LARA P&IE team thus far, between 2017 and the first school term of 2020.

### NORC LARA P&IE Data Collection Tasks (2017 – 2020)

YEAR	EGR	SRGBV	R&A	CRO	PE
2017	Term 1: Baseline	Term 1: Baseline	Term 1: Round 0 (Sample creation) Term 2: Round 1 Term 3: Round 2	Term 3: Round 1	
2018			Term 1: Round 3 Term 2: Round 4 Term 3: Round 5	Term 3: Round 2	

YEAR	EGR	SRGBV	R&A	CRO	PE
2019	Term 3: Midline	Term 2: Midline	Term 1: Round 6 Term 2: Round 7 Term 3: Round 8	Term 3: Round 3	
2020			Term 1: Round 9		Term 1: Final PE

The table below includes the number of schools sampled for data collection in each district.

### Number of Schools in Each Sample, by Language

LANGUAGE	EGR	SRGBV	R&A	CRO*	PE*
Luganda	132	40	35	15	2
Runyankore/Rukiga	132	40	36	16	2
TOTAL	264	80	71	31	4

\* The schools selected for the CROs and PE are not intended to represent the universe of C2 schools in the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga language regions.

The schools selected for the EGR and R&A sample are stratified by dominant language (Luganda or Runyankore/Rukiga) and treatment status (T1, T2, or control). For EGR surveys, 44 schools were selected in each arm for a total of 264 schools. At baseline (2017), 20 P1 learners were randomly selected in each school to be assessed. At midline (2019), we randomly selected 20 P3 learners from each of the same school. As part of the EGR sample, we also interviewed the teacher in charge of the grade and the head teacher.

For the R&A study, twelve schools were selected in each arm—except for the control group with 11 schools—for a total of 71 schools. At baseline we created a random sample of 30 learners enrolled in P1 and 30 learners enrolled in P4. We followed them every school term.

The sample for SRGBV survey-related data includes only schools in the T1 or T2 groups, given that the relevant comparison is between schools that received the EGR activities and schools that received the EGR plus the SRGBV activities. The sampled schools are stratified by language and treatment status with each of the four arms including 20 schools—80 schools total. However, schools in both language regions can be pooled together during analysis, in contrast to EGR. At baseline, we interviewed 20 learners enrolled in P2, 20 in P4, and 20 in P6 in each school. At midline we interviewed 20 P4 and 20 P6 learners -and some P5 learners when the numbers were insufficient- in the same schools. In addition, we interviewed learners' caregivers, teachers and head teachers, and conducted a school inventory.

The table below indicates the learners' grades of enrollment at the time of the data collection.

### Grades of learners in NORC LARA samples

EVALUATION	EGR	R&A	SRGBV
Baseline (2017)	P1	P1 and P4	P2, P4, and P6
Midline (2019)	P3	P3 and P6 (mostly)	P4 and P6 (some P5)

Finally, in October 2017 and 2018 we observed teachers' reading instructional practices in P1 classrooms, and at midline (2019) in P3 classrooms.

### SRGBV FINDINGS

We find a very modest effect of SRGBV activities. **We find that teachers in T2 schools show more gender-equitable attitudes than teachers in T1 schools and that this difference is**



**statistically significant.** There is no statistically significant difference in learner school climate indicators between T1 and T2 schools.<sup>3</sup> Qualitative findings also reveal several themes related to fear of going to school, feelings of safety to and from school, and fear of reporting violence.

**In general, the use of physical and emotional violence remains high. For the most part, there is no statistically significant difference in the approach to discipline used between T1 and T2 groups.** However, there is a statistically significant reduction of six percentage points in the percent reporting taking a child's privileges away as punishment in T2 vs. T1 caregivers. This is a reduction in a non-violent discipline approach.

**Looking specifically at corporal punishment, we find no statistically significant differences between T1 and T2 schools at baseline or midline when caregivers, teachers, and head teachers were asked whether or not they believed corporal punishment was an effective form of discipline.** Few teachers (around 12 percent at midline) say that corporal punishment is an effective form of discipline, however, around 60 percent of them report hitting learners on the buttocks with an object such as a stick, broom, cane, or belt; 22 percent use public humiliation and 19 percent cursed learners as a discipline method at midline. Qualitative data indicate similar findings, despite teachers having received trainings on alternative discipline methods.

**The prevalence of violence is still very high and there are no statistically significant differences in the percentage of learners that were victims of violence between T1 and T2 schools.** The majority of learners report suffering emotional (98 percent) and physical violence at school (94 percent) and around 38 percent report sexual violence (these are results for T2 schools). We do see some statistically significant differences in the incidence of some sub-categories of violence. For example, 59 percent of learners in T1 schools report being hit in school with an object (cane, stick, belt, or book) by a teacher. In T2 schools, it is 52 percent and the difference is statistically significant. The frequency of this type of behavior is identical in T1 and T2 schools.

The proportion of learners that report having a trusted adult to whom they can report violence is 49 and 58 percent in T1 and T2 schools respectively. **The difference between T1 and T2 schools is statistically significant, suggesting that LARA activities had an effect in this domain.**

Evidence of implementation of SRGBV activities in T2 schools is far from universal. The duration of the LARA SBCC campaign to prevent corporal punishment and promote positive discipline methods was too short for teachers and caregivers to fully grasp and internalize new knowledge and cultivate new social expectations and disapproval that would support building new social norms promoting positive discipline methods.

Indicators on implementation for teachers and head teachers show higher rates of familiarity with Journeys materials and experience with Uganda Kids Unite groups. Over 85% of teachers and head teachers reported having seen Journeys materials in their schools, launching a Uganda Kids Unite group, and participating in a Uganda Kids Unite meeting or similar activity with learners. However, **only 25 percent of learners participated in any activity related to violence prevention** and only 52 percent have seen any materials related to Journeys. Implementation seems to need attention.

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<sup>3</sup> The 4 indicators include: (i) learners are sometime afraid to go to school for fear of punishment, (ii) learners feel safe when they are at school, (iii) learners feel safe on the way to and from school, and (iv) learners fear reporting when someone older touches their private parts at school.

## RETENTION AND ATTENDANCE FINDINGS

Using the panel of learners that we followed every term since the baseline, we find statistically significant differences in the learners' enrollment status by treatment group at midline among the Runyankore/Rukiga language area schools, but the data does not suggest significant differences between treatment groups in the Luganda language area. Learners in T1 and T2 Runyankore/Rukiga area schools tend to stay enrolled in the original school at significantly higher rates than those from control schools. **In the Runyankore/Rukiga dominant language regions, learners in T1 schools are significantly less likely to transfer to other schools and learners from T2 schools are significantly less likely to drop out, compared to those from control schools. However, there are no statistically significant differences in grade repetition by treatment group in either region.**

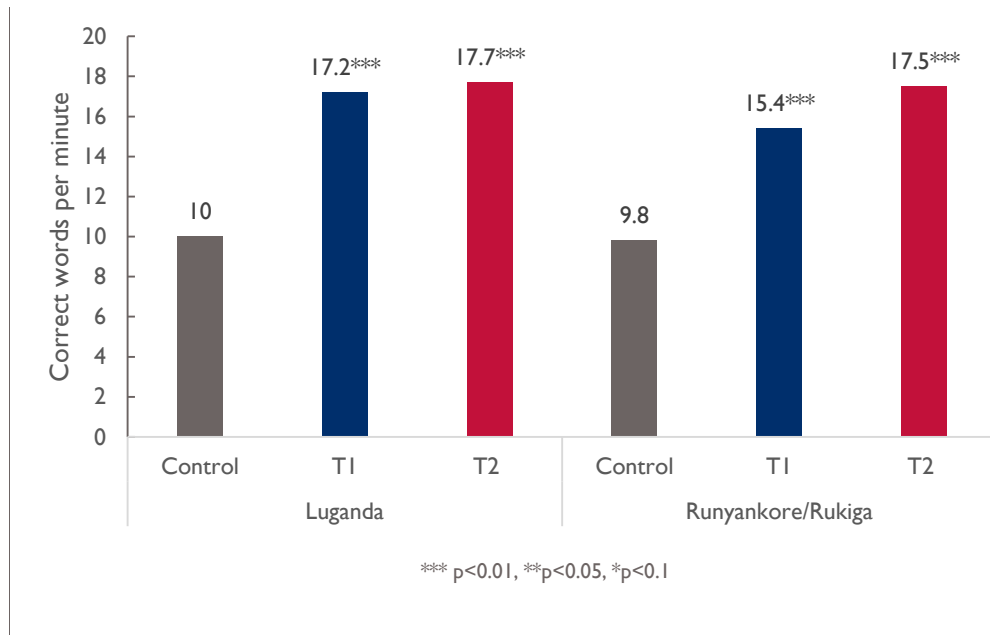
We measured learners' and teachers' absenteeism during our unannounced visits. **Absenteeism remains high among learners and unchanged since baseline.** The average attendance rate is **81 percent in the Luganda speaking region and 83 percent in the Runyankore/Rukiga speaking region.** We do not find statistically significant differences when comparing attendance rates by treatment groups in each language area. On average, **slightly over 80 percent of classrooms visited had a teacher present during instruction time.** In the rest of the cases, the teacher was somewhere else in the school –in another classroom or not– or absent. **We do not find significant differences between the teachers' attendance status by treatment group in either region.**

## EARLY GRADE READING FINDINGS

At the end of 2019, **LARA shows positive effects on the reading performance** of cohort 2 P3 learners in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga dominant language regions. The effects of the program are similar in each region, giving us great confidence in the findings, and, as expected, LARA had stronger effects in local languages than in English. We found **no difference in reading performance of P3 learners between T1 and T2 schools which indicates that SRGBV-related program components brought no additional benefit to learners' reading ability.** We show below the number of correct words per minute that the average learner reads from a short grade 2 level paragraph by treatment group. In both treatment groups, the learners' performance is significantly better than in the control group; however, the differences between T1 and T2 are not significantly different.

**An improvement in reading performance was found across groups of learners with different reading abilities.** EGRP reduced the number of zero scores among P3 learners and also increased the percentage of learners that reach at least 20 cwpm in the oral reading fluency subtask. This is an important achievement however, **reading performance remains, on average, quite low for the treated learners by the end of P3.** Learners' decoding skills are low; on average, learners in T1 and T2 schools can identify less than 14 correct letter sounds in a minute. Reading ability is low as well. Over a quarter of P3 learners benefitted by LARA are non-readers – they cannot read a single word from a short grade 2 level paragraph – and on average, oral reading fluency is around 17 words per minute, which is far from the levels needed to comprehend the text.

### Oral Reading Fluency in local language – P3 Learners



Nevertheless, the improvement due to LARA EGR activities is significant. The progress achieved by the program is a good base upon which to build. With that aim, we explored in detail the different components of LARA ERG activities to identify what works well and what needs to be improved.

**The strengths of the LARA program are evident when comparing instructional reading practices between treatment and control schools.** Many, although not all, treatment classrooms implemented the program on the day of classroom observation. **Having LARA reading books in the lessons supported a greater engagement by learners with text,** and more opportunities to read an extended text. Learners in control classrooms and treatment classrooms not implementing the program read no extended text, but rather engaged in choral recitation of single words or short text written on the blackboard. LARA also offered opportunities to engage with literacy-specific skills and content around the phonetic, semantic, and syntactic aspects of language. Lessons tend to focus on the letter, syllable, word, sentence, and extended text levels, although **around half of the observed teachers completed 50 percent or less of the lesson plan for the day. The more challenging aspects of the program were left out.** P3 teachers are more likely to follow aspects of the program that closely resembled the structure of P1 and P2 lessons than those that require additional and more challenging work on vocabulary and language structure. Lessons lack opportunities for learners to read extended texts, and particularly to read silently and independently.

The fact that these aspects were often not exploited does not diminish the importance of how the program explicitly instructs learners how to read. In control and treatment classrooms not implementing the program, instruction focused on content topics (health, culture, gender), and the informational content relevant to these topics was emphasized rather than literacy-specific skills and content.

**Neither CAM forms nor alternative methods are used by P3 teachers to conduct a continuous assessment of learners.** Sometimes, teachers listen to individual learners read, but their feedback is quite restricted. One of the crucial methods of reading practice and assessment (I do, we do,

you do) potentially contributed to a very repetitive, chorused discourse, empty of evaluative potential. The above observations suggest that further work is needed during teaching, training, and support supervision visits to instill rich, engaging, and motivating language learning in the classroom, which is the foundation for developing literacy. **Support supervision visits are less frequent than they should be. In particular, support supervision by CCTs and district education officers is very low.** This seems to be a consequence of lack of time, lack of means to reach the schools, and competing responsibilities. Head teachers are not engaged in support supervision either. This creates an important challenge that was already present in USAID/SHRP – the activity that preceded LARA. **If support supervision is not properly and credibly embedded in the education system, it will not be sustainable and most likely will disappear once the LARA ends.**

**LARA distributed plenty of reading books among treatment schools that were very well-received. However, in many classes, reading books are not in the hand of learners as they should.** This seems to be the result of schools' policies that keep learner's books in storage perhaps to avoid them being damaged, undermining the full potential of the program. The lack of opportunities that learners have to handle books and experience individual reading is reinforced by the lack of reading materials at home. **Supplementary reading materials and reading cards are scarce and the lending system for the few materials available does not work well.** It is hard to overestimate the importance of having access to a quality, print text in the development of children's literacy and learning and in the creation of positive behaviors and habits that support reading development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Improve the school climate: Making the school climate safer for learners is within the domain of head teachers and teachers' responsibilities. More can be done here in two key areas.

- School infrastructure: Many learners continue to feel unsafe in school due to a lack of boundary wall and latrines that lack locks on the doors. Future programs on SRGBV that include funding for a boundary wall may result in quick payoffs. At a minimum, it is easy to insist that school latrines have functioning locks to ensure program support.
- Change head teacher and teacher behavior: Train **all** teachers on positive, non-physical disciplinary methods, SRGBV prevention and response, not victim-blaming survivors of violence, and effective, non-re-victimizing communication through guidance and counseling. Going beyond an SBCC approach, start with teacher discussion groups to reflect on gender norms, as well as school and community expectations for teachers' behaviors that underpin SRGBV. Groups can work toward developing a shared understanding of the negative effects of SRGBV on child development and academic achievement as well as new, positive norms that define a safe, supportive, nurturing, and reliable teacher. A SBCC campaign that sends a clear message that it is acceptable to talk with children respectfully, use non-violent, positive disciplinary methods, and not use harsh physical or psychological punishment could be embedded within a norm change approach. On-going and in-service training for teachers is required beyond the limited implementation of one program; the cascading model of training does not seem to be working.

Include SRGBV prevention activities as part of the school hours, rather than having SRGBV as an extracurricular activity. Undertake and test a pilot that changes the approach towards SRGBV. For example, all grades P1-P7 could have one hour of SRGBV prevention per week.

SRGBV encompasses a large and complicated range of issues to address as one of the multiple program components. Future programs should have SRGBV as an explicit focus, with activities that address the

problem from several angles directly, including social and gender norm change strategies at a peer reference group level, and school and community levels specifically addressing norms that underpin and perpetuate SRGBV to evaluate how the intervention affects students' exposure to SRGBV. Journeys focuses largely on socio and emotional learning with SRGBV interspersed throughout; a more targeted and streamlined message with more time to learn the material is critical.

Revise the program that relies on district support supervision. District officials do not have the time and resources to visit the schools for support supervision. Given that the current system is not working and there are challenges to changing it, it would be best to empower the head teachers so they can provide the necessary support supervision within their schools.

Work at the national level with MoES: Ministry officials understand the importance and seem open to the idea of including SRGBV prevention and response in their primary teacher college curriculum that focuses on teacher development and management. This is important and will have a long-term impact on reducing SRGBV. Additionally, explore working with MoES to change the current Reporting, Tracking, Referral, and Response process whereby only head teachers report cases of SRGBV cases to the LC or district. School teachers being allowed to report incidents can help prevent head teachers from becoming gatekeepers and interfering with child violence survivors seeking justice.

## **EARLY GRADE READING**

Teacher training and support: The high level of implementation fidelity in treatment schools potentially offers a good base on which to build, to extend teachers beyond excessive repetition, and to encourage more learner speaking, oral language development, and engagement with the text's meaning. We recommend the inclusion of more discussion and demonstration of these activities during training and during support visits. In particular, conducting demonstrations in the actual classroom could be very valuable for teachers.

Some MoES officials, based on their belief that the EGR program is a success, are pushing it to be fully integrated into pre-service training offered at Primary Teacher Colleges (PTCs) and Universities. This type of action is promising and should be carefully considered in future programs.

Improve teacher support supervision: A larger fraction of teachers in treatment schools received more frequent support supervision than those in control schools; however, there are still many teachers that do not receive supervision at all or do not receive it frequently enough to make it useful. In particular, support supervision by head teachers, CCTs, and district education officers is very low. Evidence suggests that including follow-up classroom visits and teacher support increases learning gains (see the 2018 World Development Report). We recommend exploring this challenge and focusing on how to effectively scale support supervision within the education system to ensure the sustainability of the program, given that the current approach is not working.

Continuous Assessment. LARA or future programs needs to revise its approach to training teachers in conducting a continuous assessment of learners. CAM forms are not being used, teachers are not creating alternatives, and even oral feedback to learners seems insufficient.

Putting reading books in learners' hands. Additional work and training needs to be done with head teachers and teachers to persuade them that reading books and supplemental materials are only useful if they are in the hands of the children. This idea should be reinforced during support supervision visits. Reading materials to take home are insufficient and schools are reluctant to lend them to the children. In the future, it would be worth considering alternatives to create inexpensive products, for example,

newsprint materials, which even if not designed to last years, can be given to children to read at home or in school.

# I INTRODUCTION

## I.1 EVALUATION PURPOSE

NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC), in partnership with subcontractor Panagora Group, serves as the independent evaluator for the Performance and Impact Evaluation (P&IE) of the Literacy Achievement and Retention Activity (LARA), implemented by RTI International (RTI), in Uganda. LARA is a 6-year (April 2015–April 2021)<sup>4</sup> USAID-funded activity designed to support the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in its efforts to improve early grade reading (EGR) and retention.

LARA concentrates on two results: Result 1 (R1) improved capacity to deliver early grade reading in three local languages<sup>5</sup> and English; and Result 2 (R2) improved retention in early primary grades, through the reduction of school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) resulting in safer school environments. Both of these results are intended to contribute to the overall objective of improving reading skills.

The Uganda LARA P&IE activity (April 2016 - April 2021) has two objectives:

- To assess the impact of LARA on learners' literacy skills and retention rates
- To assess the performance of LARA in terms of project management, learning, design, implementation, results, and sustainability.

There are two clusters of schools where LARA activities take place. Cluster 1 (C1) schools started receiving the intervention in 2015-2016 prior to the start of this evaluation. The focus of NORC's evaluation is Cluster 2 (C2) schools that LARA only started reaching in 2017 after NORC had collected baseline information for both EGR and SRGBV in term 1 of 2017. NORC's LARA P&IE covers C2 schools located in areas where two languages dominate: Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga.

## I.2 EVALUATION COMPONENTS

The LARA P&IE consists of two components: (1) an Impact Evaluation (IE), and (2) a Performance Evaluation (PE). The IE addresses the following questions:

- What is the impact of R1 activities on reading performance and retention rates?
- What is the additional impact of R2 activities on reading performance and what is the impact of R2 activities on SRGBV intermediate outcomes?
- What is the total impact that R1 + R2 activities have on reading performance and retention rates?

The IE also estimates the effect of the R1 and R2 activities on learner attendance, a major predictor of dropout and grade repetition.

The purpose of the PE is to provide insights into LARA program implementation and the IE results. Thus, the PE focuses on the following questions:

- Is LARA on track to achieve results by the end of the project?

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<sup>4</sup> LARA was originally conceived as a 5-year activity, but it was extended for a sixth year.

<sup>5</sup> The three local languages are Luganda, Lunyankore/Rukiga and Runyoro-Rutooro. Since there was only one district with three CCTs that predominately used the Runyoro-Rutooro languages, and therefore insufficient sample size, NORC's evaluation is restricted to the 12 districts dominated by the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga languages.

- What are the key outcomes of the project?
  - Were activities carried out as planned? Adaptions by LARA that were not in their original design are noted in *italics*.
  - Are activities sufficient and relevant to achieving Result 1 and Result 2?
- What factors accelerated or inhibited the achievement of LARA results?

The LARA P&IE uses a mixed-methods approach combining a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design and qualitative methods. Randomization of treatment assignment was conducted at the Coordinating Center Tutors (CCT) level, assigning all schools under a CCT to treatment T1 (receiving R1 EGR activities only), treatment T2 (receiving R1 EGR and R2 SRGBV activities), or the control group (receiving no activities).

This report summarizes the findings of the midterm IE and the PE. The midterm IE quantitative and qualitative data was gathered between July and October 2019, while the PE qualitative data was collected in March 2020.

### **I.3 EVALUATION REPORT STRUCTURE**

Section 2 of this report provides the background on LARA. We present the program objectives and activities as originally designed and planned. Changes in implementation and adaptations are noted where appropriate when we describe activity outcomes and examine the fidelity of implementation. Section 3 presents the evaluation design including the methodology, sample, instruments, and limitations. In Section 4, we present the combined findings from the impact and performance evaluation in three sections: section 4.1 is the effect of R2 activities on SRGBV intermediate outcomes, section 4.2 presents the retention and attendance findings, and section 4.3 the early grade reading proficiency findings (this also includes findings from the classroom observations). Section 5 includes our conclusions for SRGBV followed by EGR. In the final Section 6, we suggest recommendations.



## 2 LARA BACKGROUND

### 2.1 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

LARA aims to improve the reading skills of 1.3 million primary-grade learners in government schools in 31 districts throughout Uganda. LARA has two main goals:

- R1 (Increased capacity to deliver early grade reading) focuses on strengthening the capacity of MoES and other educational stakeholders to deliver EGR in three local languages (Luganda, Runyankore/Rukiga, and Runyoro/Rutooro) in Primary 1 (P1) to Primary 3 (P3) with a transition to English in Primary 4 (P4).
- R2 (Improved retention in primary grades) endeavors to further improve children’s retention and active participation in early primary grades (P1–P4) through the reduction of SRGBV, resulting in the establishment of a positive and supportive school climate for learning.

All LARA activities are intended to work towards Result 1 and/or Result 2. Both Results 1 and 2 use a phased approach, starting with 16 C1 districts during Year 1 and continuing with 15 C2 districts in Year 2. NORC P&IE focuses on C2 districts. Thus, unless specified, all program activities and outcomes reported are focused on C2 districts.

### 2.2 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### RI. INCREASED CAPACITY TO DELIVER EARLY GRADE READING

LARA is expanding the EGR methodology that was implemented by the USAID/Uganda School Health and Reading Program (SHRP)<sup>6</sup>. The R1 main activities of LARA in C2 districts are:

- **Training:** Training of teachers in EGR methodology to strengthen their reading instruction skills followed by refresher trainings. As part of the training program, teachers receive a teaching guide and pupil books. The C2 EGR training is detailed below in Table 1.

**Table 1. Training on Early Grade Reading**

TRAINING	CLASS	DAYS	REFRESHER TRAINING	REFRESHER TRAINING CONTENT
January 2017	P1	5	Feb/March 2019; 1 day	Components, Literature hour, Oral literacy
January 2017	P2	5	Feb/March 2019; 1 day	Components, Literature hour, Oral literacy
January 2018	P3	5	Term 2 2019; 1 day	Components, English, Literature 2 (writing)
January 2019 May 2019	P4	3 (English) 2 (Local Lang)	Term 2 2019; 1 day	Components, Transition, Writing

<sup>6</sup> The School Health and Reading Program (SHRP) had two sets of intervention: An Early Grade Reading intervention targeted at learners Grades 1-3, and an HIV/AIDS intervention targeted at upper primary and secondary school learners.

TRAINING	CLASS	DAYS	REFRESHER TRAINING	REFRESHER TRAINING CONTENT
September 2019		2 (English)		

LARA uses a training of trainers (ToT) approach, which starts with training lead facilitators and conducting training sessions for individuals who would provide training to classroom teachers. Trainers were identified among former teachers, CCTs<sup>7</sup>, and district education staff. Over time, LARA has identified ways to improve the ToT and included more scripted training guides. *In Year 3, LARA adapted the EGR training program by refining the content and changing the frequency and duration of training from five continuous days to a 3-2-2 day program to allow time to absorb and practice the material.*

- **Continuous Assessment Monitoring (CAM):** CAM is a process to collect evidence about the learner’s acquired reading skills. It is not a test that produces a score or grade that can be shared with caregivers. The teacher guides describe how to use CAM forms to assess the learners’ reading performance across multiple competencies. LARA does not deliver CAM forms to teachers, but they can photocopy or create their own based on the examples provided in the teacher guides.
- **Teaching and learning materials:** LARA distributed teacher guides and P1 to P4 pupil reading books (also known as primers). The teacher guides and pupil reading books cover the reading and writing hours for every week of the full academic year. Originally developed by SHRP, the pupil books are written in English and local languages, reflect the cultural diversity of the regions in Uganda, and progress through the thematic curriculum. *Early on, there were challenges with book distribution, but most of those were resolved when district offices and head teachers were given responsibility for distribution as a cost reduction measure by LARA.* LARA’s goal, consistent with MoES’ policies, was to put a reading book into the hands of each learner. LARA provided training for head teachers on book care and storage, and each school received a padlock and metal box where books are to be returned at the end of each school day after being inventoried. The reading books distributed in 2016 were supposed to be replaced in 2019 by the MOES because they have a 3-year life span, but this has not happened yet.
- **Support Supervision:** LARA Field Assistants (FAs), who are former teachers, provide supervisory support and mentorship to primary teachers trained in EGR. They are expected to visit teachers in their classrooms to observe EGR lessons and provide instructional support once per school term (three times a year in total). The last time that FAs were expected to provide support and observe the degree to which teachers demonstrated the competencies learned in the EGR training was in 2017 for P1 and P2 teachers, 2018 for P3 teachers, and 2019 for P4 teachers. During their visits to P1 and P2 classes, FAs also assessed the reading skills of three randomly selected learners through “learner checks.”

Finally, FAs also built the skills of MoEs officials, district officials, and CCTs for district-led supportive supervision. Initially, FAs joined district teams to conduct support supervision to accelerate the reach and frequency of school support in supporting teachers’ use of EGR materials and methodology. By Year 4, 14 out of 30 districts were leading and financing their own support supervision exercise to monitor progress, performance, and implementation of EGR.

<sup>7</sup> CCTs are school support workers in charge of monitoring education quality. Each CCT is responsible for a certain number of schools within a district (one district typically has multiple CCTs).

LARA has also trained head teachers and zonal head teachers on teaching support supervision.

- **Uganda Learning/Literacy Campaign (ULC):** The ULC, implemented in local languages between February and April 2018, used a social and behavior change communications (SBCC) approach to encourage caregivers to read with their children. LARA provided subgrants to community-based organizations (CBOs) to implement SBCC campaigns that included at least 20 drama shows in each C2 district, as well as home visits with caregivers. LARA also trained field teams on interpersonal communication across four thematic areas of supporting children’s reading: the value of education, the role of the caregiver, creating time for reading, and the caregiver-child relationship. The goal of these trainings was to more effectively engage with caregivers during home visits. At the national level, it consisted of two television commercials (running daily for two weeks), one radio program (running weekly for one month), and four radio advertisements (running daily for one month).
- **Supplemental reading materials** The ULC was complemented by distributing story cards and supplemental reading books in English to C1 and C2 schools. The story cards are one page, double-sided, and laminated for durability. LARA developed eight different story cards that are grade-level appropriate: four for P1 and P2, and four for P3 and P4. Field teams of trained interpersonal communicators met with caregivers to teach them how to use the story cards, even if the caregiver is not literate. The story cards were intended for pupils to take home to read to/with their caregivers. LARA trained teachers and head teachers on a lending protocol of supplemental reading materials.

## **R2. IMPROVED RETENTION IN PRIMARY GRADES**

R2 is implemented in close collaboration and partnership with the MoES and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD). According to the LARA Theory of Change, the secondary program final result, “Result 2,” envisioned a long-term outcome, “improved retention in primary grades.” This outcome will be pursued through medium-term capacity-building within the government school system and communities to create, “positive and supportive learning environments” (LARA AMELP Year Four). The program aimed to work on multiple levels, both school- and community-wide, utilizing a synergetic approach to training community leaders and members as well as education sector staff at national, district, and school levels. LARA sought to strengthen the education system and community capacities to cultivate safe and enabling environments for primary grade children to attend school, advance from one grade to the next, avoid dropping out, and thereby improve their early grade reading skills. The main activities of LARA’s R2 in C2 districts are:

**Journeys training: The Journeys curriculum is implemented using three activity handbooks, aimed at a target population for SRGBV prevention and to strengthen the process of response, reporting, and referral. The three activity handbooks include the content shown in**

- Table 2. Note that the Journeys for Pupils is actually targeted toward teachers to use when working with learners in the school on SRGBV issues. Table 3. SRGBV Journeys Training days per target population.

**Table 2. Contents of Journeys Activity Handbooks**

FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF	FOR PUPILS (TARGETED / GEARED TO TEACHERS)	FOR COMMUNITIES
<p><b>Introduction;</b> Guidelines; the Journeys Five-Step process for inspiring change; Community based management; Planning and evaluation forms.</p> <p><b>Activity Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding Positive and Supportive Schools</li> <li>- Barriers to Positive and supportive Schools</li> <li>- Child Protection Basics</li> <li>- Violence Against Children in Schools</li> <li>- Response to Violence Against Children in Schools</li> </ul> <p><b>Annexes:</b> Information briefs (SRGBV definitions; Positive Discipline Responses: Alternatives to Corporal Punishment; Discipline versus Punishment; Ten Keys to Safer Schools Strategies for Improving School Climate); Uganda Teacher’s Code of Conduct; Uganda Children’s Act; Glossary; Bibliography; Sources of Activities.</p>	<p><b>Introduction:</b> Guidelines; Registration Form; Planning and Evaluation Forms and Attendance Registers</p> <p><b>Activity Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowing Myself, My Friends, and My School (activities 1-13)</li> <li>- Building Positive Relationships, Understanding and Solving Social Challenges (activities 14-26)</li> <li>- Making Decisions When Facing Violence; Being a Good Friend (activities 17-39)</li> </ul> <p><b>Annexes:</b> The Journey’s Five-Step Process for Inspiring Change; Definitions of SRGBV; Positive Discipline Responses: Alternatives to Corporal Punishment; Discipline versus Punishment; Ten Keys to Safer Schools: Strategies for Improving School Climate; Government of Uganda’ Teachers Code of Conduct; Government of Uganda Children’s Act; Social and Emotional Learning Competencies; Matrix of Activities by Social and Emotional Learning Competencies; Matrix of Activities by Journeys Goals; Matrix of Activities by Thematic Life Skills and Values; Glossary; Bibliography; Sources of Activities</p>	<p><b>Introduction;</b> Guidelines on Using this Handbook; The Journeys Five-Step Process for Inspiring Change; Community based Case Management; Planning and Evaluation Forms</p> <p><b>Activity Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (activities 1.1-1.7)</li> <li>- Barriers to Positive and Supportive Schools (activities 2.1-2.6)</li> <li>- Child Protection Basics (activities 3.1-3.2)</li> <li>- Violence Against Children in Schools (activities 4.1-4.7)</li> <li>- Response to Violence Against Children in Schools (activities 5.1-5.9)</li> </ul> <p><b>Annexes:</b> Information Briefs (SRGBV definitions; Positive Discipline Responses: Alternatives to Corporal Punishment; Discipline versus Punishment; Ten Keys to Safer School Strategies for Improving School Climate); Uganda Children’s Act; Glossary; Bibliography</p>

The SRGBV training aimed at delivering Journeys in cohort 2 districts is detailed below.

**Table 3. SRGBV Journeys Training**

YEAR	NO. OF DAYS	TARGET
2017	5	2 School Change Agents (SCAs) (1 male; 1 female)
2017	2	Head Teacher (HTs)
2018	2	Refresher training for SCAs and HTs
2018	1	Cluster learning event for SCAs and community change agents (CCAs) to discuss what is working or not
2018	N/A	CCAs (caregivers, para social workers, community leaders) get trained in Journeys for the community
2019	N/A	10 teachers were targeted for training as teacher patrons to facilitate Journeys for Pupils activities through UKU clubs.

Following a ToT model, CCTs and Community Development Officers (CDOs)—supported by LARA FAs, trainers, and Regional Program Officers—built the capacity of school change agents (SCAs, including head teachers and teachers) to improve school climate, and to respond to and prevent SRGBV. The SCAs are in charge of training all school personnel on the knowledge foundations of school climate, and facilitating dialogue on gender norms and power relations that produce and perpetuate SRGBV. The FAs conducted once-per-term support visits to SCAs in Years 2 and 3, and were trained on supporting teacher patrons and SCAs to conduct Journeys dialogue in 2019.

- **Uganda Kids Unite (UKU):** Teacher patrons support the establishment and implementation of UKU groups, using the Journey’s for Pupils handbook. UKU groups, initiated in Year 3, allow primary school learners to develop an understanding of SRGBV, as well as develop their socio-emotional learning and individual and collective sense of agency to avoid, challenge, and prevent SRGBV. UKU lead facilitators were trained in December 2017, and the UKU Teacher Patron training was conducted in 2018. The plans included training 10 teachers per school in all T2 schools (which includes 2 SCAs) on Journeys for Pupils.
- **Community subgrants:** Provide grants to community-based organizations (CBOs) to train and support community change agents (CCAs) to work together to contribute to building a safe and caring school climate and catalyze community SRGBV response and prevention initiatives. To this end, in Year 3, LARA distributed Journeys for Communities handbooks to subgrantees and communities. The program also trained subgrantees on grants management, the Journeys approach, and Reporting Tracking Referral and Response (RTRR). The CCAs were trained in the Journeys program for communities in 2018 and expected to cover 142 schools across three R2 implementing school districts. In Years 3 and 4, subgrantees mapped referral networks in their districts, and established Village Child Case Management Committees (VCCMCs) to receive, refer, and track progress on SRGBV cases of violence against pupils reported to them. Uganda’s 2014 “Reporting, Tracking, Referral, and Response” (RTRR) guidelines were to be operationalized through VCCMCs. Each VCCMC has around seven members, a CCA, a school change agent, a head teacher, a Community Development Officer, a representative of a Village Health Team, the Local Council One representative, and religious leaders.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> More details regarding VCCMCs are found in Annex C.

- **SRGBV-related SBCC:** Support a targeted SBCC initiative that builds widespread awareness of the attitudes, gender norms, and power relations that produce and maintain SRGBV in an effort to equalize these power dynamics. This initiative also promotes actions that prevent SRGBV. The SBCC pilot activities were implemented in Year 3. RTI partnered with a Ugandan communications organization to develop the SBCC campaign for the prevention of corporal punishment in communities and schools. Community-based organizations as LARA subgrantees implemented the SBCC campaign rollout in schools in 15 districts between June and August 2019.
- **National support:** Contribute to implementation of Uganda’s National Child Policy (2017–2022) to make ending violence against children a country-wide priority. LARA has also worked to strengthen MoES knowledge, commitment, and action in SRGBV prevention. Key activities under this component include:
  - Technical support to MoES Violence Against Children in Schools (VACiS) working group and quarterly meetings – started in Y2
  - Engaging MoES, MoGLSD, foundational bodies to end violence against children; training of trainers in SRGBV and Journeys events on the national and district levels; and providing Journeys material to district duty bearers
  - Support to MoES on child protection policies and follow-up

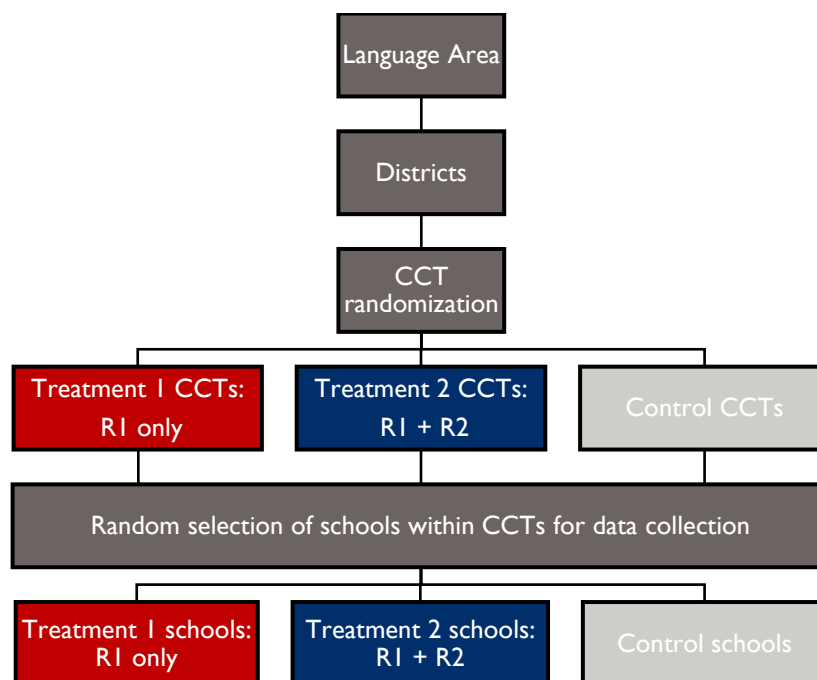
### 3 EVALUATION DESIGN

#### 3.1 METHODOLOGY

The LARA P&IE uses a mix of mutually reinforcing qualitative and quantitative methods that reflect the program design, research questions, and indicators. NORC combines the results of each technique to capture the diversity of opinions and perceptions of both beneficiaries and stakeholders. The qualitative data supplements and enriches quantitative findings by addressing research questions not well-suited to quantitative analysis. In particular, when evaluating the effect of SRGBV activities on retention and different forms of violence prevalence, we explore possible causal pathways through which the intervention is operating, and how different contextual factors may affect outcomes.

The IE combines an RCT design and qualitative methods. Since each CCT is responsible for many schools within a district, randomizing at the school level would have required a CCT to treat schools under their jurisdiction differently if some were treatment schools and others controls, leading to a high risk of 'contamination' between treatment and control groups. To avoid this problem, randomization was done at the CCT level, assigning all schools under a CCT to treatment T1 (receiving R1 EGR activities only), treatment T2 (receiving R1 EGR and R2 SRGBV activities), or the control group (receiving no activities). Within each CCT, schools were randomly selected for data collection at baseline (in 2017). The same schools were visited in 2019 for the midline data collection, with EGR and SRGBV data collected between July and October 2019, respectively. Figure 1. Selection of Treatment and Control Groups illustrates the selection of treatment and control groups process.

Figure 1. Selection of Treatment and Control Groups



The IE also estimates the effect of the R1 and R2 activities on learner attendance, a major predictor of dropout and grade repetition. Therefore, every school term – three per year – NORC checks the retention and attendance (R&A) of just over 3,500 learners who were selected at baseline from 71

schools. Furthermore, we conduct classroom observations (CROs) in term 3 of each school year to assess the fidelity of implementation of the EGR activities and compare teaching practices of 30 treatment and control schools. This report includes the results of CROs conducted in October of 2017, 2018, and 2019 during unannounced visits.

The goal of the PE is to provide insights into LARA program implementation and the IE results, so an extensive review of LARA documentation was conducted to obtain information to answer the key evaluation questions and to determine what additional data was required to address these questions or help explain the quantitative findings of the IE. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders at the national, district, and school levels were conducted in March 2020.

Table lists all data collection efforts conducted by the LARA P&IE team thus far, between 2017 and the first school term of 2020.

**Table 4. NORC LARA P&IE Data Collection Tasks (2017 – 2020)**

YEAR	EGR	SRGBV	R&A	CRO	PE
2017	Term 1: Baseline	Term 1: Baseline	Term 1: Round 0 (Sample creation) Term 2: Round 1 Term 3: Round 2	Term 3: Round 1	
2018			Term 1: Round 3 Term 2: Round 4 Term 3: Round 5	Term 3: Round 2	
2019	Term 3: Midline	Term 2: Midline	Term 1: Round 6 Term 2: Round 7 Term 3: Round 8	Term 3: Round 3	
2020			Term 1: Round 9		Term 1: Final PE

### 3.2 SAMPLE

The random sample selected for EGR includes schools in C2 districts dominated by the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga languages in the sample frame. The school sample drawn for SRGBV data collection (a subset of EGR schools) spans 11 of the 12 intended districts—a fact that does not affect the representativeness of the sample. Table includes the number of schools sampled for data collection in each district.

**Table 5. Number of Schools in Each Sample, by Language**

LANGUAGE	EGR	SRGBV	R&A	CRO*	PE*
Luganda	132	40	35	15	2
Runyankore/Rukiga	132	40	36	16	2
Total	264	80	71	31	4

\* The schools selected for the CROs and PE are not intended to represent the universe of C2 schools in the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga language regions.

The NORC evaluation team selected schools for the EGR, SRGBV, and retention and attendance (R&A) samples using a sample frame of all government primary schools, including information on the district, coordinating center, language, and LARA treatment status. The schools selected for the EGR and R&A sample are stratified by dominant language (Luganda or Runyankore/Rukiga) and treatment status (T1, T2, or control). For EGR surveys, 44 schools were selected in each arm for a total of 264 schools. At baseline (2017), 20 PI learners were randomly selected in each school to be assessed. At midline (2019),



we randomly selected 20 P3 learners from each of the same schools. As part of the EGR sample, we also interviewed the teacher in charge of the grade and the head teacher.

For the R&A study, a total of 71 schools were selected – twelve schools in each arm, and eleven in the control. At baseline we created a random sample of 30 learners enrolled in P1 and 30 learners enrolled in P4. We followed them every school term. At midline most of them were enrolled in P3 and P6.

The sample for SRGBV survey-related data includes only schools in the T1 or T2 groups, given that the relevant comparison is between schools that received the EGR activities and schools that received the EGR plus the SRGBV activities. The sampled schools are stratified by language and treatment status with each of the four arms including 20 schools—80 schools total. However, schools in both language regions can be pooled together during analysis, in contrast to EGR. At baseline, we interviewed 20 learners enrolled in P2, 20 in P4, and 20 in P6 in each school. At midline, 20 P4 and 20 P6 learners - and some P5 learners when the numbers were insufficient – were interviewed in the same schools. In addition, we interviewed learners’ caregivers, teachers, and head teachers, and conducted a school inventory.

Table 6 below indicates the learners’ enrollment grades at the time of data collection.

**Table 6. Grades of learners in NORC LARA samples**

TIME OF DATA COLLECTION	EGR	R&A	SRGBV
Baseline (2017)	P1	P1 and P4	P2, P4 and P6
Midline (2019)	P3	P3 and P6 (mostly)	P4 and P6 (and some P5)*

Note: \* When there were not enough P6 learners in the school we added learners from P5.

Finally, in October 2017 and 2018 we observed teachers’ reading instructional practices in P1 classrooms, and at midline (2019) in P3 classrooms.

### ANALYTIC SAMPLE SIZES

Table displays the number of completed interviews for each survey type, in addition to the gender and local language distributions. For both data collections, approximately half the learners interviewed were female, and more than 50% of teachers for EGR data collection and caregivers for SRGBV data collection were female. Additionally, 28% of SRGBV teachers and 30% of head teachers for both EGR and SRGBV data collections were female. The samples for all surveys were nearly balanced between respondents from Runyankore/Rukiga and Luganda-dominant schools.

**Table 7. Sample Characteristics**

SURVEY	NUMBER	PERCENT FEMALE	PERCENT LUGANDA
<b>EGRA</b>			
Learner	4,927	50%	48%
Schools surveyed	264	--	50%
Teacher	230	67%	52%
Head Teacher	250	30%	48%
<b>SRGBV</b>			
Learner	2,904	51%	48%
Primary Caregiver	613	59%	50%
Teacher	151	28%	48%
Head Teacher	80	28%	50%

SURVEY	NUMBER	PERCENT FEMALE	PERCENT LUGANDA
School Observations	80	--	50%

Table shows that all 30 planned focus group discussions (FGDs) were completed. The SRGBV FGDs were conducted separately by gender, and half of FGDs were conducted with female learners, primary caregivers, and senior teachers while the other half with male learners, primary caregivers, and senior teachers.

**Table 8. Focus Group Discussions for EGR and SRGBV**

DOMINANT LANGUAGE	SRGBV LEARNERS	PRIMARY CAREGIVERS	TEACHERS	EGR PRIMARY CAREGIVERS
Luganda	2 with girls 2 with boys	2 with male caregivers 2 with female caregivers	2 with senior male teachers 2 with senior female teachers	3
Runyankore/Rukiga	2 with girls 2 with boys	2 with male caregivers 2 with female caregivers	2 with senior male teachers 2 with senior male teachers	3
TOTAL	8	8	8	6

Finally, we used purposive qualitative range sampling to select 48 respondents for the PE KIs, including informants at the national, district, and school level. At the central level, representatives of USAID/Uganda and RTI, as well as MoEs officials in a broad spectrum of directorates, departments, and units were interviewed. In the districts of Isingiro, Bukomansimbi, and Masaka, we conducted KIs with education officers, inspectors, tutors, probation and social welfare officers, and child and family protection police unit officers. In each language region, 2 T2 schools were visited, and KIs were conducted with the head teacher or deputy head teacher, as well as classroom teachers for P2 and P3 to discuss EGR, and P4 and P6 teachers to discuss SRGBV. We also interviewed RTI's subcontractors and subgrantees and held meetings with other major players in the EGR and SRGBV spaces.

### 3.3 INSTRUMENTS

A brief summary of instrument development and the final design is presented below.

#### EARLY GRADE READING DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) – The instrument was fielded in the dominant local languages (Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga) as well as English. The local language instruments included subtasks on Orientation to Print, Letter Sound Knowledge, Segmenting, Non-word Decoding, Oral Passage Reading, Oral Recall and Listening Comprehension. The English EGRA included subtasks on Letter Sound Knowledge, Oral Passage Reading, Listening Comprehension and Receptive Vocabulary. Details on each subtask can be found in the EGRA instruments in Annex D.

Learner Context Survey – This instrument collects basic information on the learner to complement the EGRA. We gather basic demographic information (age, sex, and language), learner's living arrangements, assets in the home, and home literacy environment. The survey also includes questions on school attendance for both the learner and his or her teacher.

Head Teacher Survey – The head teacher survey gathers information from head teachers regarding their instructional leadership – including their training and educational background and their support and supervision of reading instructional practices in the lower grades.

Teacher Survey – This survey collects information on the teachers’ demographic characteristics, education, experience, and in-service training. The questionnaire also includes questions about support supervision received, availability, use, and opinion of teaching materials, and absenteeism. At the end of the survey, enumerators counted the number of learners and the availability of reading books in the classrooms.

Classroom Observation Tool – To collect both process and input data, NORC designed a tool that includes both closed-ended items and open-ended narrative descriptions of the classroom activity. In order to gain a ‘thicker’ description in the narrative record, two fieldworkers each produced a description of the same lesson. The two descriptions at the point of analysis were then read together. In addition, the closed-ended part of the tool was completed *after* the lesson by *both* fieldworkers. In this way, judgments required in the closed-ended items were subjected to a form of inter-rater reliability at the point of data collection. Fieldworkers could also refer back to the written lesson narratives in justifying their judgments between each other. The mixed-method approach, in summary, was used to obtain a more complete understanding of what was going on in the classrooms.

Caregiver FGD – The protocol focused on a few key questions and sub-questions that are discussed in greater detail. The questions prompted caregivers to share who they think is primarily responsible for teaching their child to read, and the role of the teacher versus that of the family. It also focuses on the caregivers’ confidence and challenges in helping their child learn to read; their child’s access to reading materials, and factors affecting their child’s absence from class and their reading skills.

## **SRGBV DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

Learner Survey – NORC and Panagora developed a survey instrument that adapts the measurements of SRGBV experiences depending on gender. The instrument consists of sections on (1) demographic information, (2) the learners’ perspectives on school climate, (3) the learners’ general attitudes towards gender norms, and (4) personal experiences with SRGBV. Finally, depending on incidents disclosed during the interview and some key responses from the interviewer, the learner receives final instructions on how to follow-up with a counselor or other support services if they want to speak with someone about anything they talked about during the interview. Some reported incidents require an immediate referral to services, and these incidences are flagged in the questionnaire.

Teacher Survey – The teacher SRGBV instrument was developed to gather information on teachers’ backgrounds, perceptions of their schools’ climate, acceptance of inequitable gender norms, methods to teach learners the right behavior or to address a behavior problem, and their opinions on discipline.

Head Teacher Survey – The head teacher survey covers the background characteristics of the head teacher, their perceptions of school climate, attitudes toward disciplinary methods and exposure to any SRGBV-related training.

Primary Caregiver Survey – The primary caregiver survey instrument is designed to collect data on the child participating in the LARA program and their home environment (i.e. adverse events during childhood, household asset level), as well as establish the attitudes and behavior of the caregiver related to disciplinary methods, gender, and violence.

School Safety Inventory – The school safety inventory is a 10-item observational checklist completed by an interviewer at each school. It served as an objective measure of school safety in the context of SRGBV as reflected in its relevant infrastructure.

Learner FGD – There were separate FGDs with girl and boy learners. The protocol used participatory methods to engage the learners and get their feedback on how they feel on their journey to school, on a typical day in the classroom, and around the school, play, and latrine areas. Emotion cards and drawings by the learners were used to facilitate discussion. Learners were also asked who they can approach if they need help while in school and if they had ever had a class discussion about children’s safety in school.

Teacher FGD – This protocol asked teachers about their system of evaluation and reward and disciplining difficult learners. It also asked teachers what they know about violence and the mistreatment of learners in their school, school safety, if there has been any discussion in school on improving learner’s safety and decreasing violence, and teachers’ knowledge of child protection resources.

Caregiver FGD – Caregivers are asked similar questions as teachers concerning the use of discipline in school and existing violence and mistreatment of learners. They are asked if they have ever had a discussion with teachers or head teachers about safety and violence in school and if they can help their learners access child protection resources. The protocol also included a few general questions on the role of caregivers in improving school safety and decreasing violence and what other interventions/services/programs they think would help prevent violence against children at or around the school.

## **RETENTION AND ATTENDANCE DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

The instrument for this component consists only of the learner’s name (for tracking purposes on follow-up visits), the learner’s gender, and whether he or she was present in class at the time of the visit. The instrument also records if the learner’s teacher is present in-class teaching, present but not teaching, or absent from school.

## **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

National/Kampala-Based KIIs – These KIIs include interview guides for USAID Staff, LARA Staff, MOES, and MOG officials. These interviews asked USAID and LARA staff questions on their priority of information needs and project implementation while asking MoES and MOG officials their perspectives on LARA implementation and perceived impacts.

School-Based KIIs – These KIIs include interview guides for Teachers and Head Teachers who were asked about their role in the implementation in LARA and their perceptions on the impacts of both EGR and SRGBV components.

Community-Based KIIs – These KIIs include interview guides for district officials, including education officers, inspectors, tutors, probation, and social welfare officers, and child and family protection officers as well as LARA subcontractors and sub-grantees. Community members were asked questions about their relationship with LARA as well as their perceptions of the program’s impacts and overall management.

In Annex D: Data Collection Instruments, we include all data collection tools used for the P&IE.

### 3.4 LIMITATIONS

The Evaluation Team encountered some limitations inherent to the design of this evaluation and during its fieldwork in Uganda.

- **Representativeness of the Sample.** The EGR, SRGBV, and R&A samples are representative of the areas where LARA works within the two language regions in C2. Therefore, results are not generalizable at the national level or other geographical areas.
- **Response Rate.** The sample size of learners is smaller than originally expected because of smaller classroom sizes in Luganda-dominant schools. Also, given the sensitive nature of questions asked on SRGBV, we experienced some learner's refusal to respond to the learner survey and/or caregivers withdrawing their consent. In addition, some teachers were absent on the day of EGR data collection. Although samples are slightly smaller than intended they are sufficiently large to detect the impacts planned in the EDR.
- **Learners Checks.** Periodically, during support supervision visits LARA FAs administered learners checks - a tool used to assess learners' reading skills - to a group of randomly selected learners. The tool is composed of various EGRA subtasks, letters names, segmenting, word recognition, and oral reading fluency, which are administered to learners in different grades. The tool is not identical to the EGRA (subtasks are untimed) but it is similar and could make learners in treatment schools more used to this type of outside testing, better preparing them for EGRAs used in the evaluation. If this is the case, the effects of LARA on EGR performance could be overestimated.

The above limitations, however, did not prevent the Evaluation Team from gathering relevant information and data needed and do not compromise the integrity of the evaluation in any significant way.

## 4 FINDINGS

### SRGBV FINDINGS

In this section, we present findings using quantitative and qualitative data collected as part of the SRGBV evaluation component. We first present the effects of R2 activities on SRGBV intermediate outcomes, where we provide an overview of: attitudes towards gender inequality/norms, school safety climate, attitudes and practices of violent and non-violent disciplinary methods, learner self-reported past school year SRGBV, and child protection resources and availability. We show differences between T1 schools that only received EGR activities and T2 schools that received both EGR and SRGBV activities. This is followed by the fidelity of implementation, where we discuss if activities are carried out as planned, if activities are sufficient and relevant to achieving R2, and factors that accelerated or inhibited achievement of LARA results. Throughout the analysis, we use qualitative data to shed light and provide context to the quantitative results. All data are primary data collected by NORC. Data from LARA<sup>9</sup> is included only when we discuss the fidelity of implementation.

#### 4.1 EFFECTS OF R2 ACTIVITIES ON SRGBV INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

##### GENDER ATTITUDES

The SRGBV learner, primary caregiver, and teacher questionnaires all include a section where the interviewers read 14 statements about different aspects of gender inequality and asked the respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, or if they were not sure. For 14 statements, agreement to the statement indicates a belief in more inequitable gender norms. The 14 statements are used in the construction of an inequitable gender attitudes index. Each of the items receives a score on a scale from a 0 minimum to 2 maximum value for the response options: “Do not agree,” “Not sure,” “Agree,” following the conventions of the Gender Inequitable Men Scale.<sup>10</sup> Higher scores signify greater acceptance of inequitable attitudes toward gender norms. The values of all responses are summed, allowing for a maximum score of 28. The level of agreement varies substantially across respondent types, showing that learners hold more inequitable attitudes toward gender norms than teachers and caregivers. Table 9 shows that there is no statistically significant difference in learners’ and caregivers’ gender attitudes between T1 and T2 schools. In contrast, teachers in T2 schools show a lower level of gender inequitable attitudes than teachers in T1 schools, and the difference is statistically significant.

**Table 9. Inequitable Gender Attitude Index<sup>1</sup> at Midline**

POPULATION	T1 AVERAGE	T2 AVERAGE	DIFFERENCE	ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE <sup>2</sup>
Learners	15.2	15.0	-0.18	-0.21
Teachers	12.0	10.4	-1.56 **	-1.57 **
Caregivers	13.9	13.9	0.00	-0.12

<sup>9</sup> From their Activity Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP).

<sup>10</sup> Singh, A., Verma, R., & Barker, G. (2013). Measuring gender Attitude: Using gender-equitable men scale (GEMS) in various socio-cultural settings. *Making Women Count: An Annual Publication on Gender and valuation by UN Women Multi-Country Office for India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives*, 61. <http://promundoglobal.org/resources/measuring-gender-attitude-using-gender-equitable-men-scale-gems-in-various-socio-cultural-settings/>

<sup>1</sup> Based on 14 statements where each statement received a score on a scale from 0 at a minimum to 2 at a maximum value for the response options that include: “Do not agree,” “Not sure,” “Agree.” Following the conventions of the Gender Inequitable Men Scale. A higher score signifies greater acceptance of inequitable gender norm attitudes, with a maximum score of 28.<sup>2</sup> The adjusted difference takes into account region, age, and sex.

<sup>2</sup> Notes: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

In addition, the qualitative data also tends to show similar gender-inequitable attitudes to those found at baseline.

### Caregivers

In focus groups across both language areas, caregivers expressed frustration with the lack of protection that girls have in school. Caregivers perceive that girls are at risk of more violence from both teachers and head teachers as well as from individuals they encountered on the journey to and from school. Male and female teachers also perceive that girls are more at risk of violence in schools, and expressed concerns about girls’ safety. However, teachers and caregivers (male and female) demonstrated attitudes that place partial blame on girls for their lack of safety. Notably, such anecdotes were more frequent in discussions with female caregivers and female teachers. For example, caregivers with female children often reported that raising girls was more work, as girls are more fragile:

*I think a boy and a girl cannot face the same violence and mistreatment because the girl is more at-risk. They are fragile and get dirty easily and can smell easily if they do not take care of themselves. Yet boys require less effort to keep clean so, with poor hygiene, the girls can be mistreated and embarrassed. (Female Caregiver, FGD, RR District)*

Similarly, male caregivers were very cognizant of the safety challenges girls experience in school, including sexual harassment, challenges managing menstrual cycles, and unfair punishment. However, male caregivers suggest that girls who get pregnant by older men and drop out do so because they lack proper upbringing, or were obsessed with money. Notably, caregivers across both language areas recognized that relationships between male teachers and girls were often coercive. However, male caregivers placed blame on girls who got pregnant by other men in the community.

### Teachers

Male and female teachers across both language areas also demonstrated similar attitudes. While both male and female teachers indicated that girls faced more risks for violence than boys did, there were differences in the types of inequitable attitudes expressed. Male teachers felt that girls were given special treatment, and prioritized more than boys:

*I don’t know why the government is more concerned about girls than others. So, they really try to help the girls more than the boys. I don’t know why! (Senior Male Teacher, FGD, RR District)*

*They [implementer] have done some great work but they should improve on the selection procedure of the beneficiaries whereby boys also are given support because sometimes these girls who are supported are even better off than most of the boys who are left out (Senior Male Teacher, FGD, L District)*

Male teachers believed that such practices were leaving boys behind, and putting girls who already had enough help at an advantage.

Female teachers expressed gender inequitable attitudes through victim-blaming, and made moral distinctions between girls who were forced into sexual relationships with older men or teachers, and

those who “invited” advances from older men or teachers. Similar to male caregivers, female teachers felt that some girls wanted to buy things, and coerced older men into buying things for them. Similarly, female teachers in the Runyankore/Rukiga language area felt that girls who wear makeup were less serious about their schooling. When asked about early warning systems for identifying girls at risk of dropping out, one teacher suggests:

*Another early warning system is when you find that a primary pupil has begun smearing her face with [makeup] and every time she wants to look at her face, then you detect something dangerous in the future. (Female Teacher, FGD, RR District)*

In interviews, LARA staff also recognized the problem of violence against children in schools is rooted in long-standing social norms that uphold harsh physical punishment. Thus, it poses an enormous challenge to address this issue within only a couple of years of implementation.

*You’re trying to shift norms from time immemorial. [...] It’s a huge rock to push. You can’t just swallow a hot potato. You have to cool off and take small bites. It’s a noble cause that we have to push no matter how much time it takes. Changes could be small because of time, but they are in the right direction. (LARA technical staff member, KII)*

## SCHOOL CLIMATE

We asked learners about their feelings about safety on the way to and at school. Table 10 shows the percentage of learners that agree with each statement. There is no statistically significant difference in learner school climate indicators between T1 and T2 schools. The differences between T1 and T2 go in the correct direction, with exception of the third statement “Learners feel safe on the way to and from school.” However, the differences are very small and not statistically significantly different.

**Table 10. Learner<sup>1</sup> School Climate, Percent Agreeing with Statements**

STATEMENT	T1 AVERAGE PERCENT OF AGREEMENT	T2 AVERAGE PERCENT OF AGREEMENT	DIFFERENCE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)	ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE <sup>2</sup> (PERCENTAGE POINTS)
Learners are sometimes afraid to go to school for fear of punishment	56%	54%	-2 pp	-3 pp
Learners feel safe when they are at school	83%	86%	3 pp	3 pp
Learners feel safe on the way to and from school	69%	68%	-1 pp	-2 pp
Learners fear reporting when someone older touches their private parts at school	56%	56%	-1 pp	-2 pp

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Learners are reporting on perceptions/incidence within their own gender. Thus, girls respond considering the experience of girls, and boys considering the experience of boys.

<sup>2</sup> The adjusted difference takes into account region, age, and sex.



Midline qualitative findings reveal several themes related to fear of going to school, feelings of safety to and from school, and fear of reporting, outlined below:

**Feeling safe while they are at school.** Overall, boys and girls feel safe in school, except for specific locations within the school compound.

Similar to baseline, both girls and boys feel unsafe around the perimeters of the school compounds, where strangers from the community often lurk. In a few cases, boys reported that such people confronted them with violence:

*In the playground, sometimes the mad person comes around the pitch which makes me afraid while outside the classroom because whenever he comes around he throws stones at us when we're playing in school pitch. (Boys, FGD, L District)*

Girls had similar fears, expressing fear of being sexually assaulted by strangers roaming around the school. Girls across both language areas reported that in many cases, the men roaming near their schools were often menacing. In such instances, girls felt that they had to remain on constant alert during free time, or they would be taken away.

*You may be sleeping there and someone comes and sprays you with chloroform and pulls you into the banana plantation. (Girls, FGD, L District)*

*You may be resting in the field, and someone comes along - especially those old men - and they use you...they don't even have to spray you with chloroform, they can just cover your mouth. No one will hear your screams. (Girls, FGD, L District)*

Boys and girls recommended that school compounds should be fenced in to promote learner safety.

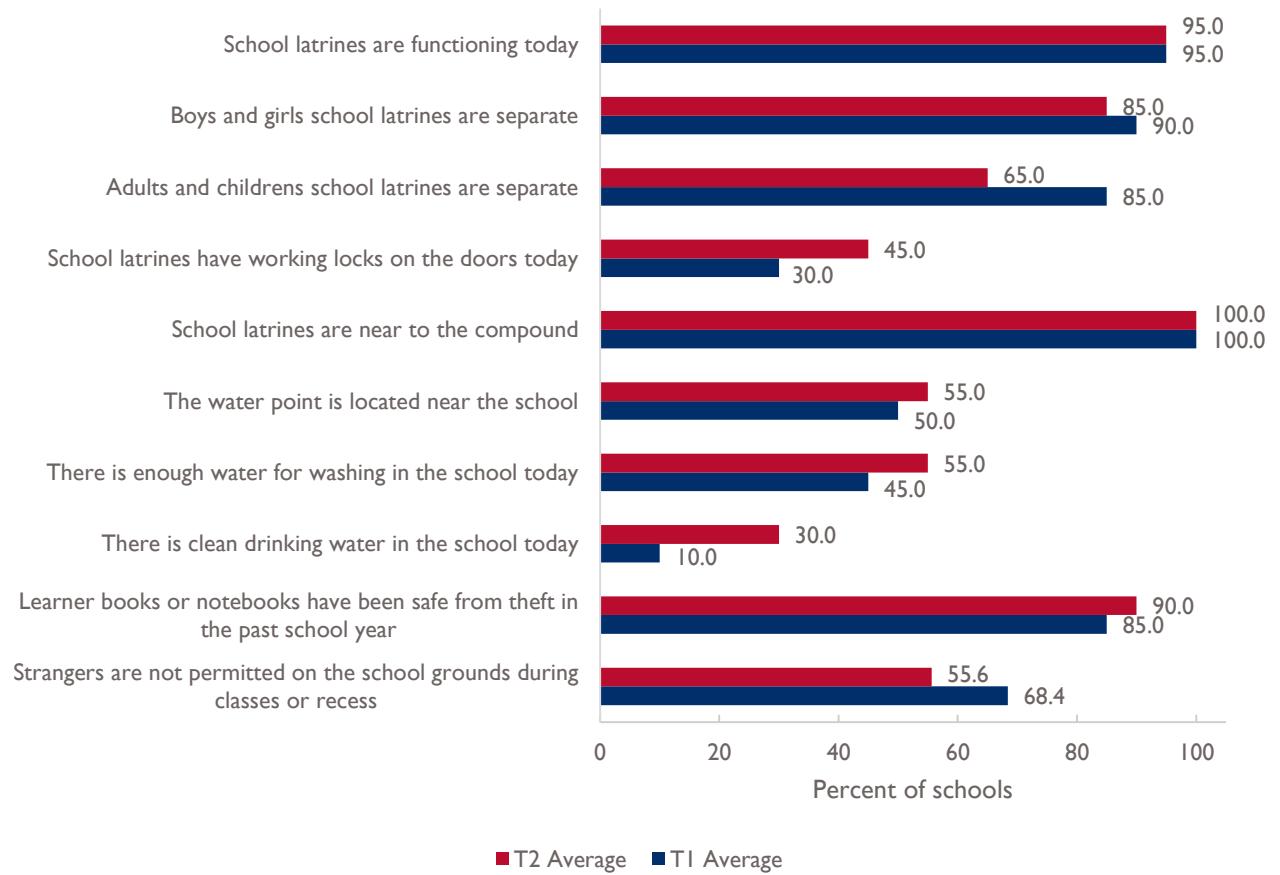
**Latrines.** Also similar to baseline, both boys and girls were afraid in the latrines area, albeit for different reasons. Girls described latrines as dirty, insecure/without privacy, poorly constructed, and too close to boys' facilities. Boys described latrines in similar ways, focusing on their lack of cleanliness and sturdiness. While boys remained afraid of falling in or getting infections, girls remained afraid of peeping toms and sexual assault.

**Feelings of safety to and from school.** Boys and girls both reported feeling unsafe during the journey to and from school. Both boys and girls also reported walking together to school to defend themselves in the event of danger. While girls perceive threats from other learners, *boda boda* men, and rapists, boys perceive threats from drunkards and mentally ill people. These findings are similar to baseline, where boys and girls expressed fears of violence traveling to and from school.

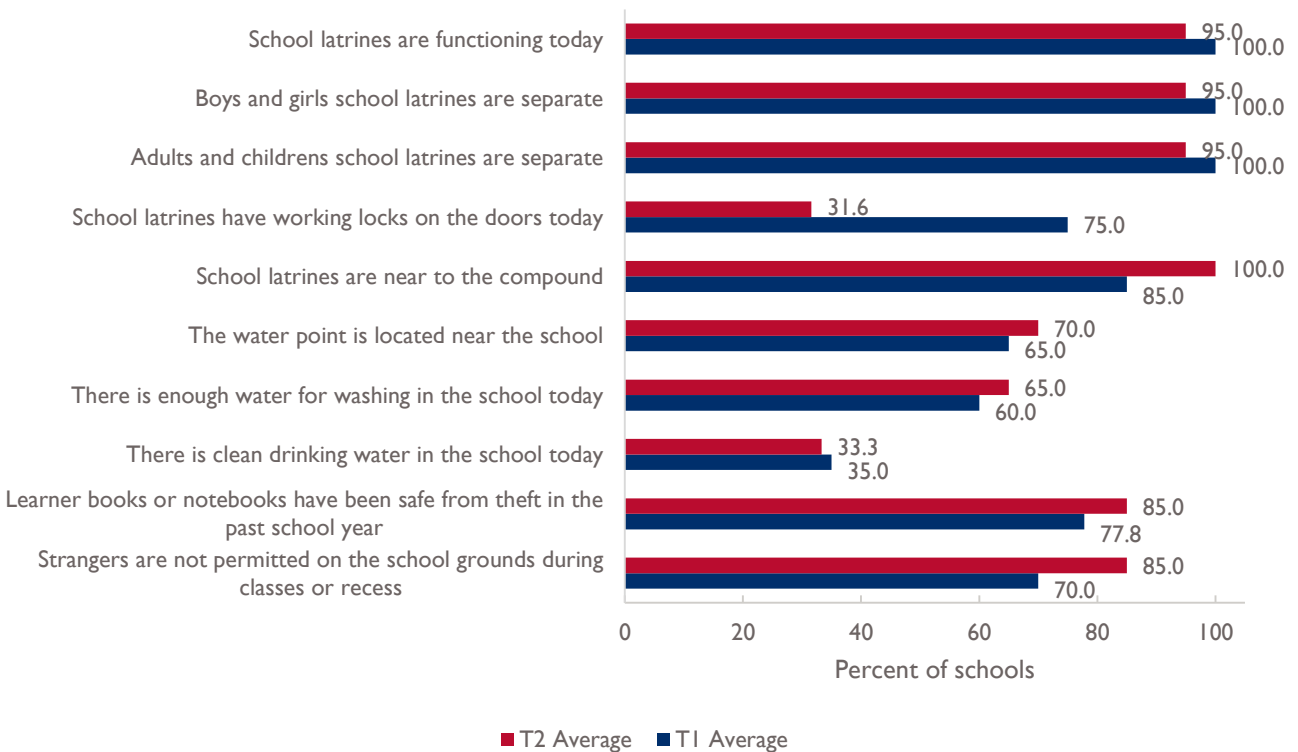
**Fear reporting when someone older touches them.** There were limited changes in terms of fear of reporting. Boys felt that they could report to head teachers, and the PTA chairman for incidences of severe corporal punishment. However, boys did not indicate they felt safer in reporting incidences of being inappropriately touched.

Girls reported that there were trusted female teachers or senior women in whom they could confide, but they remained fearful of retaliation from male teachers.

**Figure 2. School Climate Indicators by Treatment Arm, Luganda Schools**



**Figure 3. School Climate Indicators by Treatment Arm, Runyankore/Rukiga Schools**



School infrastructure can contribute to creating a safe climate. Figure 2 and Figure show the percentage of schools with certain facilities in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga language dominant areas respectively. Three issues are most salient. First, in the majority of the schools, latrines lack locks and sometimes they are shared by children and adults. This is an issue that has been mentioned, particularly by girls, as problematic in terms of safety and privacy multiple times. Second, water – when available - is not close to the school creating opportunities for unsafe situations. Finally, in a good fraction of the schools, there is no strict monitoring of the entry of strangers. Learners mentioned feeling threatened by people around the schools, and the lack of controls and entry restrictions do not contribute to a climate of safety.

**DISCIPLINARY METHODS**

We asked caregivers and teachers about violent and non-violent disciplinary methods they use with children. Table shows results for caregivers. In general, the use of physical and emotional violence remains high. For the most part, there is no statistically significant difference in the approach to discipline used between T1 and T2 groups. However, there is a statistically significant reduction of six percentage points in the percent reporting taking a child’s privileges away as punishment in T2 vs. T1 caregivers. This is a reduction in a non-violent discipline approach.

**Table 11. Violent and non-violent disciplinary methods employed by caregivers**

<b>DISCIPLINARY METHODS: CAREGIVERS</b>	<b>T1 AVERAGE PERCENT</b>	<b>T2 AVERAGE PERCENT</b>	<b>DIFFERENCE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)</b>	<b>ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE<sup>1</sup> (PERCENTAGE POINTS)</b>
Explained to the child why something s/he did was wrong	93%	96%	3 pp	3 pp
Gave the child a reward for behaving well	58%	60%	2 pp	3 pp
Hit the child with an object such as a stick, broom, cane, or belt	69%	69%	0 pp	1 pp
Gave the child something else to do to stop or change their behavior	66%	59%	-7 pp	-6 pp
Shouted, yelled, or screamed at the child	66%	64%	-2 pp	-3 pp
Cursed at the child	17%	17%	0 pp	0 pp
Spanked the child with bare hands	54%	54%	0 pp	0 pp
Took away the child's privileges	20%	13%	-6 pp*	-6 pp*

Note: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

<sup>1</sup>The adjusted difference takes into account region, age and sex.

Similarly, there are few statistically significant differences between T1 and T2 teachers. Table 4 shows that T2 teachers reduced the use of insults towards learners, not talking to learners, or locking learners up as a form of discipline but did not significantly reduce the use of other violent discipline methods or increased positive discipline in the classroom.

**Table 4. Disciplinary methods employed by teachers**

<b>DISCIPLINARY METHODS: TEACHERS</b>	<b>T1 AVERAGE PERCENT</b>	<b>T2 AVERAGE PERCENT</b>	<b>DIFFERENCE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)</b>	<b>ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE<sup>1</sup> (PERCENTAGE POINTS)</b>
Explained to a learner why something s/he did was wrong	100%	97%	-3 pp	-3 pp
Gave a learner a reward for behaving well	97%	93%	-4 pp	-4 pp
Told a learner to start or stop doing something	97%	96%	-1 pp	-2 pp
Hit a learner on the buttocks with an object such as a stick, broom, cane,	63%	60%	-4 pp	-3 pp
Hit elsewhere not buttocks with an object such as a stick broom, cane, or	29%	27%	-2 pp	-2 pp
Gave a learner something else to do to stop or change behavior	96%	96%	0 pp	0 pp
Threatened to expel a learner	32%	40%	8 pp	9 pp
Shouted, yelled, or screamed at a learner	57%	44%	-13 pp	-13 pp
Threatened to invoke harmful people, ghosts, or evil spirits against a learner	18%	15%	-3 pp	-3 pp
Cursed at a learner	12%	19%	6 pp	7 pp
Spanked a learner with bare hand	31%	29%	-2 pp	-2 pp
Locked a learner out of school	19%	19%	1 pp	1 pp
Took away a learner's privileges	13%	17%	4 pp	4 pp
Forbade a learner from going out during break time	25%	23%	-2 pp	-2 pp
Insulted a learner by calling him/her dumb, lazy, or other names	27%	14%	-13 pp*	-13 pp*
Refused to speak to a learner	20%	9%	-11 pp*	-12 pp*
Blamed a learner for bad things that happened in their life	24%	14%	-9 pp	-9 pp
Locked a learner up or tied him/her to restrict movement	8%	1%	-6 pp*	-7 pp*
Withheld a school meal as a punishment	4%	1%	-3 pp	-3 pp
Used public humiliation to discipline a learner	25%	22%	-3 pp	-3 pp

Note: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

<sup>1</sup>The adjusted difference takes into account region, age and sex.

Looking specifically at corporal punishment, we find no statistically significant differences between T1 and T2 schools at baseline or midline when caregivers, teachers, and head teachers were asked whether or not they believed corporal punishment was effective as a form of discipline (Figure 4). Few teachers

(around 12 percent at midline) say that corporal punishment is an effective form of discipline, however, as seen in Table 4, around 60 percent of them report hitting learners on the buttocks with an object such as a stick, broom, cane or belt. To explore this further, at midline a new question was asked providing an example of a common type of corporal punishment: hitting a learner with a cane or stick.

**Figure 4. Percent of caregivers, teachers, and head teachers that think corporal punishment is an effective form of discipline**

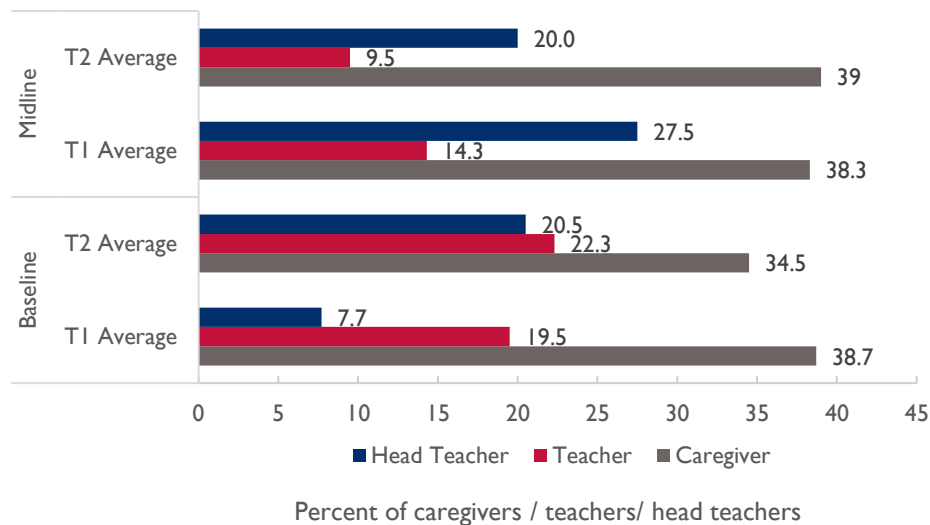
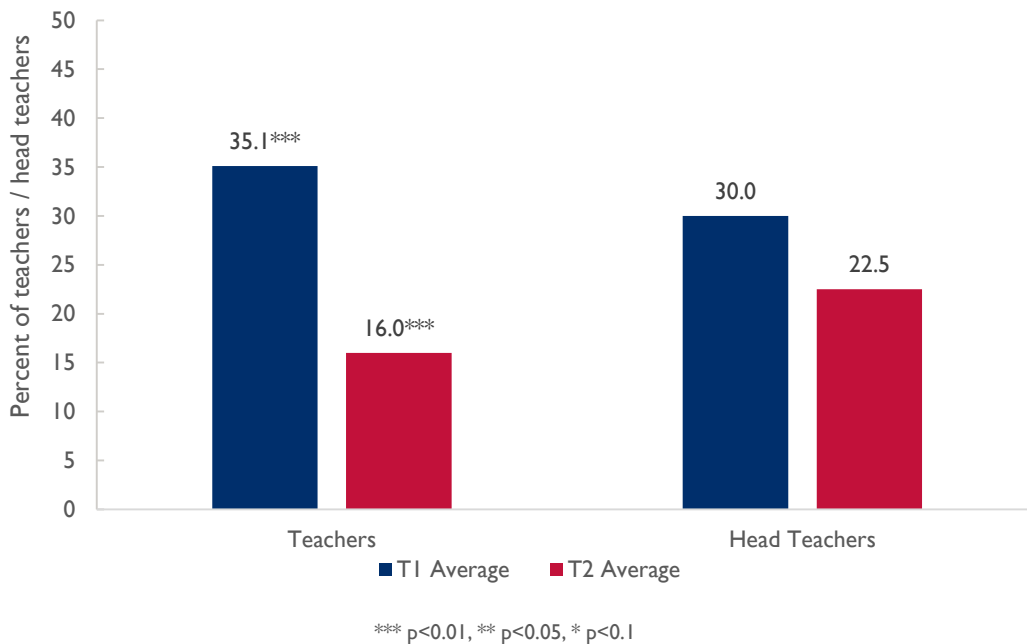


Figure shows that the percentage of T1 teachers and head teachers who believe hitting a learner with a cane or stick is an effective method of discipline at school is higher than in T2 schools, with the difference being statistically significant for teachers. These results, compared to those asking the same question using the term “corporal punishment” suggest that there is a disconnect in understanding what corporal punishment really is and suggests that teachers do not consider caning as corporal punishment. However, in KIIs with teachers in LARA T2 schools the head teachers spoke passionately about ending harsh physical punishment of learners, and attributed their newfound skills in alternative discipline methods to LARA.

*“We learned how to handle children. We used to punish children. I am disgusted with what we used to do to punish children. Alternative positive discipline means talking with a child and they apologize. A child can always reform. I keep close to the child. We meet and address the best ways to discipline children. We have a proper relationship now between pupils, teachers and the community. It was a collision before. Now we have a better relationship between teachers and caregivers” (Head teacher, KII, T2 school)*

Ministry officials in Kampala also have a perception that is different from what the quantitative results show. They felt that Journeys had contributed to “engaging communications,” and that caregivers are “giving up on corporal punishment of children” which is not seen in their responses shown in previous tables and figures.

**Figure 5. Reports of hitting a learner with a cane or stick being effective at midline**



Quantitative findings indicate that physical and emotional violence is still used. Table 4 showed that among T2 teachers, 60 percent of the teachers used some object to hit learners, 29 percent spanked them with a bare hand, 22 percent use public humiliation and 19 percent cursed learners as a discipline method at midline. Qualitative data indicate similar findings, despite teachers having received trainings on alternative discipline methods.

Teachers across both language areas report having received training on alternative disciplinary methods, including counseling and assigning classroom tasks to learners. As a result of training, teachers report that they have learned not to reprimand or embarrass learners when they get wrong answers. Notably, teachers also acknowledge that the use of alternative discipline methods is better for fostering teacher-learner relationships, while violent discipline methods often result in contentious relationships, feelings of discouragement for learners, or dropping out. However, anecdotes from teachers, caregivers, and learners indicate that the use of violent disciplinary methods remains rampant.

*At school, we have what we call ‘Conveyor Belt’ whereby about 3 or 4 teachers gather in one class and beat up a stubborn learner, or those that have performed badly in a certain subject.  
(Female Teacher, FGD, RR District, T2 school)*

Teachers attribute the continued use of physical violence to the behaviors of learners, including stubbornness, and a lack of excitement about learning. Male and female teachers express that they don’t feel completely confident in their ability to employ alternative discipline methods consistently, and should receive refresher trainings to minimize the use of physical, sexual, and emotional violence:

*If teachers were sensitized on how to handle such characters maybe some good would come out of it. Because a child can behave so badly but if a teacher has some idea on how to handle the child it makes a difference...the teacher could angrily beat up the child but if the teacher is*

*aware of some better alternative she can avoid torturing the child. So we, the teachers, need refresher courses. (Female Teacher, FGD, RR District, T2 school)*

Caregivers had similar attitudes about corporal punishment, noting that the use of corporal punishment is more effective for “difficult” learners. While male and female caregivers were opposed to extreme corporal punishment that could result in significant injuries, they felt that it was an effective method for discipline in and outside school. In fact, head teachers in T2 schools highlighted initial resistance from caregivers and community members to reducing corporal punishment in schools, stating that they are often encouraged to discipline the child harshly. A small set of caregivers in T2 communities revealed a change of perspectives and recommended looking more holistically at the child to determine what went wrong. In these instances, caregivers felt that children could benefit from jointly conceived punishment from teachers and caregivers.

Boys and girls across both language areas reported feeling afraid to go to school because of the punishments they would experience. This was most often reported for punishments around tardiness and wrong answers.

Across both language areas, boys and girls indicated that when they were tardy, they felt afraid to even go to school as they knew punishment was imminent.

*You come late and find the teacher teaching. Then he prevents you from entering, and he says if you enter he will cane you, then you keep on the door scared up to when his lesson ends, then he comes out, and when you enter you can't even keep up with what s/he has taught. (Boys, FGD, RR District)*

*You come late, they cane you, and even when you sit in class they again cane you. The teacher doesn't ask you what made you late, he just starts caning you that you came late. (Boys, FGD, RR District)*

Girls more often reported that the fear of punishment for being late would sometimes make them choose not to go to school at all.

Boys and girls also indicated being most afraid of punishment during class. Boys and girls across both language areas revealed that they were afraid of being caned for wrong answers or low marks on exams.

*You can do an exam in class and the teacher says that whoever is below 80%, canes! He returns to the classroom with the results and canes. That scares us! (Girls, FGD, L District)*

*When I am in class and the teacher beats me excess canes because of poor handwriting I feel sad. (Girls, FGD, L District)*

Boys and girls reported similar frequencies of such punishments, with boys reporting harsher punishments. While girls often described receiving 5 canes for a given incident, boys described receiving up to 20.

## **PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE**

One of the main objectives of the SRGBV quantitative data collection effort is to gather reliable first-person data on the prevalence of gender-based violence in and around schools. Each P4 and P6 learner interviewed was asked directly whether specific forms of SRGBV had happened to him or her during the last school year. This section of the questionnaire was divided into four parts: emotional violence, and



physical violence, sexual violence by a range of perpetrators, and non-verbal disclosure of violence by a teacher.

In order to gauge the prevalence of violence, the SRGBV instrument asks a series of questions asking if learners have experienced different types of emotional, physical, or sexual violence, for example, “Did anyone around school call you rude or hurtful names?” Table 13 shows the percentage of learners that report being victims of different types of violence - emotional, physical, and sexual. At midline, the prevalence of violence is still very high and there are no statistically significant differences in the percentage of learners that were victims of violence between T1 and T2 schools. The vast majority of learners report suffering emotional and physical violence at school and around 40 percent report sexual violence.

**Table 13. Learners that suffered violence**

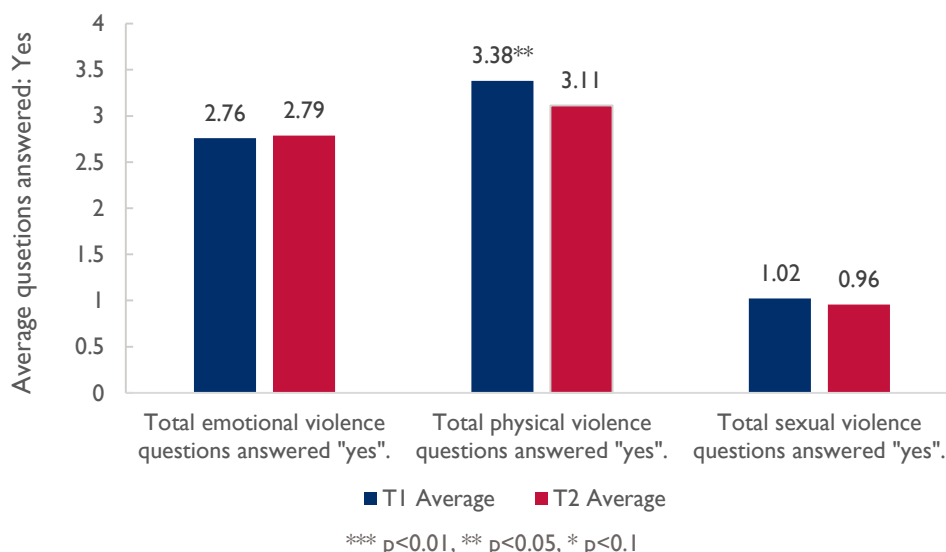
STATEMENT	T1 AVERAGE PERCENT	T2 AVERAGE PERCENT	DIFFERENCE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)	ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE <sup>1</sup> (PERCENTAGE POINTS)
Percent of learners who suffered any incidence of emotional violence.	98%	98%	0 pp	0 pp
Percent of learners who suffered any incidence of physical violence.	91%	94%	3 pp	2 pp
Percent of learners who suffered any incidence of sexual violence.	40%	38%	-2 pp	-4 pp

Note: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

<sup>1</sup> The adjusted difference takes into account region, age, and sex.

Figure shows the average number of questions that learners answered affirmatively in each violence category. Out of 9 possible forms of emotional violence, on average, learners report being victims of almost 3 of them. In the case of physical violence, the average learner reports suffering more than 3 types of violent events out of a list of 10. Learners in T2 schools report suffering slightly fewer types of physical violence than their counterparts in T1 schools. Finally, out of 13 types of sexual violence situations, the learners report having suffered one of them on average.

**Figure 6. Learners’ reported number of types of violence suffered<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> There are 9 questions about emotional violence, 10 about physical violence and 13 about sexual violence.

According to the learners, by far the most common form of violence perpetrated against them is getting hit with a cane or stick, and this is done mostly by teachers. Although teachers’ reports about using canes or sticks to hit learners are not significantly different between T1 and T2 schools, learners’ reports show some difference. Comparing T1 and T2 schools, we find that, at midline, learners report a prevalence of this type of violence that is 7 percentage points lower in T2 than in T1 schools.

**Table 14. Teachers’ use of a cane or stick to hit learners, as reported by learners**

T1 AVERAGE PERCENT	T2 AVERAGE PERCENT	DIFFERENCE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)	ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE <sup>1</sup> (PERCENTAGE POINTS)
59	52	6 pp **	7 pp **

Note: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

<sup>1</sup> The adjusted difference takes into account region, age and sex.

The frequency in the teachers’ use of a cane or stick to hit learners is the same in T1 and T2 schools. Twenty-one percent of the learners reported they were hit with a cane or stick once in the past year, 39 percent indicated that it happened a few times, and the remaining 40 percent indicated that it happened many times. A detailed breakdown of each physical, emotional, and sexual violence indicator is provided in Annex C: Additional Analysis.

Qualitative findings also indicate persistent physical and emotional violence for children. Children reported experiencing emotional violence in the form of bullying, teachers giving nicknames associated with low levels of intelligence, and bullying about their physical features. Girls continue to experience bullying from teachers and other learners during their menstrual cycle.

Girls and boys continue to experience physical violence through caning and punishments through physically-intensive tasks, including fetching water and carrying other heavy loads.

As part of good practice interviewing children about past experiences of violence, the learner survey included a question that allowed the child to disclose a past incidence of sexual violence by a teacher

without needing to verbalize the response. The interviewers presented each learner with a sheet of paper that showed two illustrations: one of a smiling child, and one of a crying child. The interviewer handed the child a pen and asked the child to mark an “X” by the sad face “if a teacher has ever touched you on your private body parts, or made you touch their private body parts”, or mark an “X” by the happy face if this had not happened to them. The interviewer noted the placement of the “X” as a response to the questionnaire. Table below shows a higher percentage of learners reporting teacher sexual violence non-verbally compared to those reporting teacher sexual violence verbally. For the verbal disclosure, learners responded to the question “if anyone around school touched your private parts when you didn’t want them to, what type of person did it?” The result shown is a combined response for both male and female teachers being perpetrators.

**Table 5. Non-verbal disclosure of sexual violence perpetrated by teachers**

LEARNER DISCLOSURE OF PAST SEXUAL VIOLENCE FROM A TEACHER	T1 AVERAGE	T2 AVERAGE	DIFFERENCE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)	ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE <sup>1</sup> (PERCENTAGE POINTS)
Verbal disclosure of past sexual violence by teacher	3.5%	3.0%	-.5pp	-.5pp
Non-verbal disclosure of past sexual violence by teacher	5.1%	4.5%	-.6pp	-.6pp

Note: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

<sup>1</sup> The adjusted difference takes into account region, age and sex.

## REPORTING OF VIOLENCE

In both T1 and T2 schools, almost all learners report knowing to whom they can report violence (Table ). However, the proportion of learners that report having an adult that they trust to whom to report violence is much lower: 49 and 58 percent in T1 and T2 schools respectively. The difference between T1 and T2 schools is statistically significant suggesting that LARA activities had an effect; however, the proportion of learners that have a trusted adult is still below 60%.

**Table 6. Learner Protection Resources**

REPORTING VIOLENCE	T1 AVERAGE	T2 AVERAGE	DIFFERENCE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)	ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE <sup>1</sup> (PERCENTAGE POINTS)
Learners know who to report to when they experience violence at school.	98%	97%	-1 pp	0 pp
Learners have an adult they trust to whom they can report violence.	49%	58%	0.10 pp ***	0.10 pp ***

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

<sup>1</sup> The adjusted difference takes into account region, age and sex.

Trained as LARA Change Agents, teachers interviewed outlined reporting pathways for child survivor-disclosed or third-party witnessed SRGBV incidents in schools set up as part of the LARA program. A Head Teacher noted that community-based VCCMCs, “tried to put in place control in school discipline, and sat with teachers to discuss discipline cases.” In cases of reporting sexual abuse though, a teacher to whom a learner disclosed was more likely to report this to the senior woman teacher or senior man teacher to “intervene” with the child and bring in the head teacher for further steps.

*“She should report that thing to her caregivers and to the head teacher for further help. I have to report to the senior woman teacher or senior man teacher to the head teacher to make a follow-up with the senior teacher engaged. The head teacher has to call in the perpetrator for more questions. If proved true, we forward the case to the authorities who report to the police.”* (Head Teacher, KII)

Some head teachers recognized that cases of severe physical violence with injuries or sexual violence against pupils were beyond their capacity or mandate and should be reported to the subcounty Community Development Officer (CDO) or the police. Police interviewed said they train DPSWOs, CDOs, district education officials, head teachers, as well as held ad hoc community informational meetings to provide instructions and answer questions on when a case should be reported to the police. Other head teachers sought to investigate and “resolve” these cases on their own. Investigation of and decisive ruling over a sexual abuse case is outside of the skills or mandate of a senior teacher or head teacher, risking retaliation against and re-victimization of child sexual abuse survivors as well as protection of abusers in the school or community. A reporting structure through the head teacher, renders head teachers gatekeepers capable of interfering with child violence survivors seeking justice or health assistance.

Key informants widely perceived LARA impacts on SRGBV prevention and response as tied directly to head teacher support or lack of support for teachers and pupils taking time and resources to conduct Journeys activities in school. Further, follow-up actions after a pupil reported an incident of SRGBV within the school often was “left up to the head teacher [regarding] what actions to take” (Male Teacher, LARA Change Agent).

Teachers, head teachers, and other school staff lacked skills for effective, non-revictimizing communication with a child survivor, particularly survivors of sexual abuse. While many head teachers and teachers do their best to care for children, good intentions without technical training, support, and mentorship can lead to unintended consequences. Teachers responded simply telling, for example, a child sexual violence survivor, “Don’t commit suicide and don’t run away. You’re not the only one this has happened to so don’t feel alone. You’ll be fine.” (Senior Woman Teacher, T2 school), which does not follow survivor-centered, child-friendly communication practices with child GBV survivors. Teachers widely described providing, “guidance and counseling,” to girls and boys who reported SRGBV incidents, but when asked what they would say to counsel a child violence survivor, it became clear they had not been trained for effective, non-re-victimizing communication in guidance and counseling. “There was a lot of victim blaming around sexual violence” (LARA subgrantee).

Teachers reported that Community Development Officers, with a government child protection mandate, “could help solve some disputes, such as if a pupil was defiled, but they have neglected their role as CDOs.” When asked about a school register of SRGBV cases, no T2 schools in the performance evaluation could produce one. One teacher claimed they had handmade a case-register themselves, but could not locate it at the time of the interview.

## **EVIDENCE OF FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION**

In this section, we answer two main questions across all SRGBV activities undertaken by LARA. First, were activities carried out as planned and were they sufficient and relevant to achieving R2? Second, what factors accelerated or inhibited achievements of LARA results? Findings here are drawn from both the midline impact evaluation and final performance evaluation.

## **ACHIEVEMENT OF LARA PERFORMANCE TARGETS, RTI ESTIMATES**

Table 7 below shows LARA’s annual progress toward activity targets. Note, however, that LARA reports totals for C1 and C2 while the P&IE quantitative information is only for C2 which is the focus of this evaluation. Data were not available from LARA for every relevant indicator at the time of the external

performance evaluation due to limited or unavailable records of teacher and pupil attendance at Journeys and UKU activities in schools, for example. According to the P&IE C2 data, 25% of schools had written feedback on SRGBV prevention and response supportive supervision visits from district education officials, LARA's AMELP shows this (indicator 2102) at 35% in 2019 for C1 and C2 schools. While LARA reports having exceeded its targets on the numbers of teachers trained in SRGBV, the analysis below spotlights challenges teachers faced in incorporating this training consistently throughout school. Insights from LARA staff and other stakeholders in the next sections provide information about challenges and opportunities the LARA program faced in implementing Journeys trainings with teachers and school staff, with pupils through UKU groups, and with communities.

**Table 7: LARA AMELP Indicators**

Country Development Cooperation Strategy Links	RESULTS	FY 2016 ANNUAL ACTUAL	FY 2017 ANNUAL ACTUAL	FY 2018 ANNUAL ACTUAL	FY 2019 ANNUAL ACTUAL	TARGETS	LARA COMMENTS FY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT
DO3: IR 3.3: Sub-IR 3.3.1	Proportion of schools observed to have written feedback on SRGBV response and prevention from monitoring and support supervision actors	--	17% (459 / 2,698 T2 schools)	36% (971 / 2,697 T2 schools)	35% (895 / 2557 T2 schools)	25% in 2017; 25% in 2018; 35% in 2019	“Monitoring and support supervision of school-level SRGBV activities by support agents (e.g. head teachers, CCTs and school inspectors) is still low due to limited head teacher involvement (e.g., some of them see Journeys as extra work, excessive head teacher absenteeism from school, etc.). This is compounded by the CCTs’ heavy workload, leaving little time to support Journeys and limited facilitation for district support teams to conduct school visits. Our strategy in Year 5 focuses on strengthening school leadership support to Journeys activities in schools.”
DO 2: IR 2.3: Sub-IR 2.3.1	Number of teachers trained in SRGBV	3,812 (1,649 women, 2163 men)	2,772 (1,352 women, 1,420 men)	10,369 (5,734 women, 4, 635 men)	12,573 (6,267 women, 6,306 men)	27,729 (14,662 women, 13,067 men)	“LARA trained 12,573 teacher patrons (7,393 from 1,635 basic education schools and 5,180 from 565 PEPFAR-supported schools. The project achieved its target on this indicator.”
DO2: IR 2.3: Sub-IR 2.3.1	Number of schools implementing actions to reduce SRGBV	--	--	1,055 / 2,697 T2 schools	428 / 2,557 T2 schools	1,027 for 2017; 1,771 for 2018; 1,238 for 2019	“Teachers are still struggling with applying the “5 step process of inspiring change” which is the source of data for this indicator. In addition, some schools do not document actions they have implemented. This makes it difficult for the project to report without source documents. The project intends to address these challenges in Yr.5 through support supervision visits to schools.”

Note: All baseline values were zero; Sources: LARA Annual Reports 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019; and LARA AMELP Year Four

## GENERAL STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF LARA

District education officers felt that LARA had contributed skills building on social and emotional learning (SEL), self-management, and responsible decision-making in schools. District officials claimed that the program has led to changes in their inspection visits, in that now they look for sticks and canes that might be used for punishment, in classrooms during inspections. One District Inspector claimed that assessment of Journeys and UKU implementation had been added to the District Inspection forms, however on review of those forms, the Performance Evaluation team found that the only specific mention of any relevant activity was “UKU,” and that this was added to the “comments” section grouped together with other co-curricular activities, including EGR, School Management Committees (SMCs), and Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) project. In no place on the forms were there specific questions or places to put detailed information and observations about Journeys and UKU implementation during an inspection visit. In the performance evaluation key informant interviews, LARA staff had raised the need for integrating inspection monitoring of SRGBV prevention and response activities into district monitoring tools:

*“The [LARA] project is doing best with its workforce, but District Officials need to do more, not project staff alone. Routine activities should be in District Monitoring Tools, should not be outside of academic structural monitoring of activities. The safety of learners comes last. Incorporate SRGBV monitoring tools as mandatory to check schools by district officials, DEO, DIs.”* (LARA technical staff member, KII)

A LARA technical staff member elaborated further:

*“Teachers need to believe alternatives to corporal punishment will work. Teachers need training, but once training is over, they won’t do anything about it. The main issues are bullying and corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is mainly perpetrated by teachers. Set rules to end bullying in school. Strengthen engagement and support to teachers. If they are not supported, they will not see it working and they will abandon it. Sustained training is required. When districts are planning supportive supervision visits or should do one, they should include EGR activities, but should also include SRGBV, Journeys as part of their LoE (Level of Effort) and their performance assessment. [District education officials] should set benchmarks and targets on Journeys.”* (LARA technical staff member, KII)

District education officers raised the issue that teachers find it difficult to manage learners because of the large numbers of pupils in a class, sometimes more than 100, and that this negatively affected Journeys and UKU implementation. District officials acknowledged that LARA SRGBV intervention has “not been the best implementation because teachers’ workloads are too much” (District Inspector).

Ministry officials felt that LARA complemented what MoES, their Gender Unit, and the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MoGLSD) were already trying to do to prevent and respond to violence against children. Ministry officials recognized SRGBV as a “very big challenge,” on which LARA had “not achieved as much as on EGR.” Uganda already had an enabling, supportive policy environment, structures, and strategic plan prior to LARA, according to a MoGLSD official. LARA program interventions that aimed to create a friendly school environment fit well with education sector work to address challenges of low retention of learners in school, particularly girls, and high violence prevalence.

Ministry officials reported engaging across a range of key stakeholders to eliminate violence against children in all contexts in Uganda, including schools. They highlighted how Journeys has contributed, “engaging communications,” and that caregivers are “giving up on corporal punishment of children.” Officials recognized that violence against children in schools leads to dropout and early pregnancy, raising issues of sexual exploitation and abuse of girls by teachers and motortaxi (bodaboda) drivers.

Child labor also was recognized among officials as contributing to violence against children and school dropouts, citing reduced school attendance on market days. Ministry officials considered LARA's lesser achievements on safety in schools as "maybe because the job is enormous."

### **SBCC CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT CORPOREAL PUNISHMENT, PROMOTE POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE METHODS IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES, AND IMPROVE TEACHER KNOWLEDGE**

Result 2 intervention components included a social behavior change communications (SBCC) campaign to prevent corporal punishment in communities and schools. The program approach was to: "Support a targeted SBCC initiative that will strengthen the implementation of SRGBV-related policies, build widespread awareness about the attitudes and gender power relations that serve to produce and maintain SRGBV and to directly equalize gender roles, and to promote actions that serve to prevent SRGBV" (LARA Y4 AMELP 2019). LARA partnered with a Ugandan communications organization to develop the SBCC campaign<sup>11</sup> and with a Ugandan research and evaluation organization to plan and conduct an evaluation of a one-month long pilot of the SBCC campaign in two districts. Following the pilot, the SBCC campaign was implemented in schools in 15 districts between June and August 2019 and was targeted at caregivers and teachers of PI through P4 learners.

After about a decade of the corporal punishment ban in schools, the duration of LARA SBCC campaign to prevent corporal punishment and promote positive disciplinary methods was simply too short for teachers and caregivers to fully grasp and internalize new knowledge and cultivate new social expectations in support of building new social norms promoting positive discipline methods.

*"The lifespan of our intervention was limited. Corporal punishment has been done by our caregivers and grandparents We cannot address this in one month. The pilot for corporal punishment was implemented over three months. It should have been six months, then go back again. Success through repetition."* (LARA partner, KI)

The quantitative data confirms the above qualitative findings. Focusing on teacher and head teacher knowledge regarding the schools' codes of conduct and SRGBV being punishable by law, we don't see any statistically significant differences between T1 and T2 teachers and head teachers (

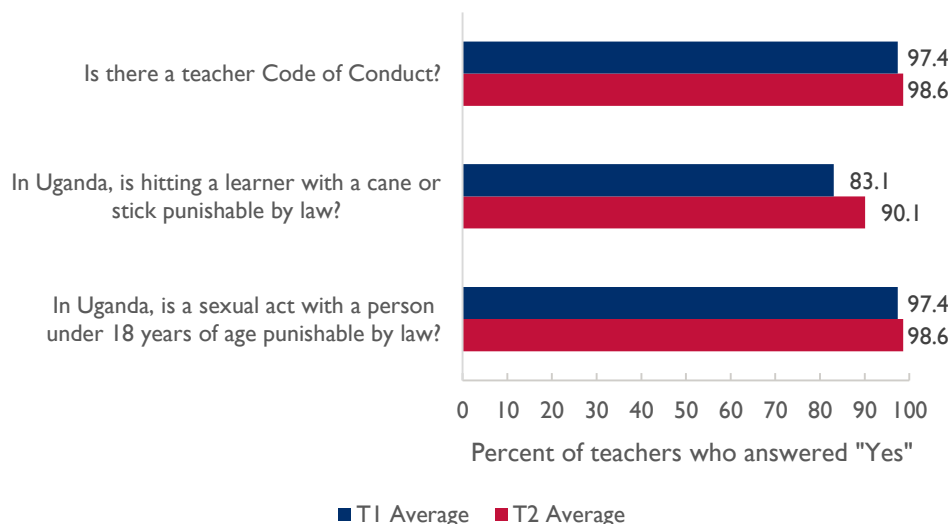
Figure 7 and Figure 8). Both groups of teachers are familiar with teacher codes of conduct. There is a difference of seven percentage points between T1 and T2 teachers who know that hitting a learner with a cane or stick is punishable by law, however, the difference is not statistically significant. What is striking is that even though 90% of T2 teachers know that hitting a learner with a cane is punishable by law, 60% of them still do this, suggesting that the law is not enforced (see Table 4).

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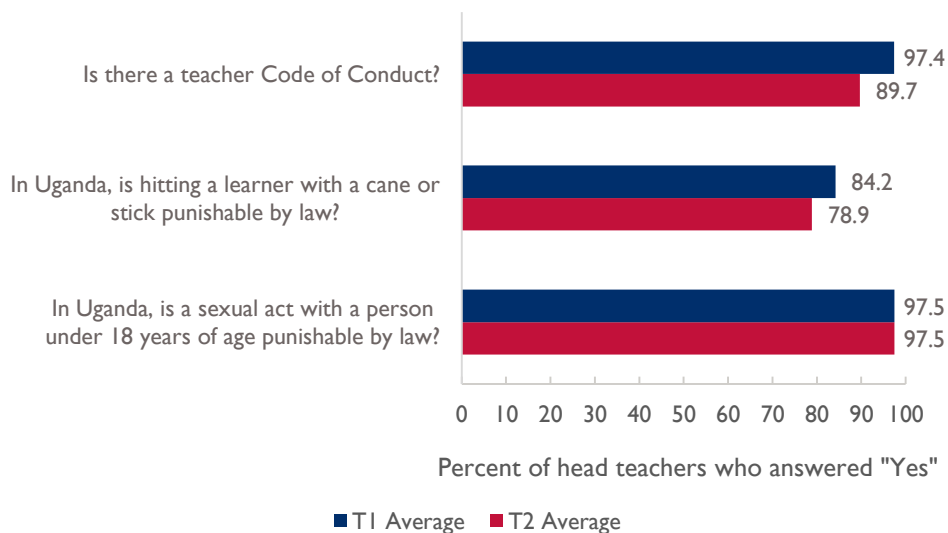
<sup>11</sup> LARA brought together caregivers, teachers, head teachers, local government leaders, representatives of community-based theater groups, illustrators, and graphic designers to develop the SBCC campaign. The design included drama performances, mobile cinema, interpersonal communications, print materials (pocket sized booklets and wall posters), radio advertisements, programs, and jingles. Interpersonal communication was led by retired head teachers and teachers trained to use SBCC program materials incorporating counterarguments on the benefits of positive discipline, and how they themselves had changed to give up corporal punishment and adopt positive discipline methods



**Figure 7. Teacher knowledge**



**Figure 8. Head teacher knowledge**



**TEACHER TRAINING**

Table below details results from the Teacher Survey related to types of training teachers have received on addressing behavior problems and preventing violence at school. We first asked if teachers have ever received training to address behavioral problems. There is a statistically significant difference between the percent of T1 and T2 teachers who have received this type of training (18 pp difference). In all the categories of this type of training (bullying, physical and sexual violence), we find that more T2 than T1 teachers received training. Next, we asked about LARA training to prevent violence at school. While 82 percent of T2 teachers received training for LARA, only 21 percent of T2 teachers did. This suggests

there is some level of training leakage to T1 teachers. This may be due to teacher transferring between schools and/or T1 teachers misreporting on trainings they have received from other sources in the past.

**Table 8. Teacher training**

STATEMENT	T1 AVERAGE	T2 AVERAGE	DIFFERENCE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)	ADJUSTED DIFFERENCE <sup>1</sup> (PERCENTAGE POINTS)
Have you ever had training for learning behavior problems?	73%	91%	18 pp***	18 pp***
Have you ever had training to prevent bullying?	63%	93%	30 pp***	30 pp***
Have you ever had training to prevent physical violence?	75%	92%	18 pp**	18 pp**
Have you ever had training to prevent sexual violence?	70%	88%	18 pp**	18 pp**
In the past year, have you participated in LARA training on preventing violence at school?	21%	82%	61 pp***	61 pp***

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

<sup>1</sup> The adjusted difference takes into account region, age and sex.

Table shows the specific types of training received by the 82 percent of T2 teachers that reported participating in LARA training. Most T2 teachers were trained as Teacher Patrons to prevent violence for pupils (77 percent); 41 percent were trained as Change Agents and 13 percent as SRGBV lead facilitators. A smaller percentage of T2 teachers were trained on SRGBV compliance and referral case management (3 percent each) and some were trained as trainers themselves (5 percent).

**Table 9. Type of LARA training received by T2 teachers under R2 activities**

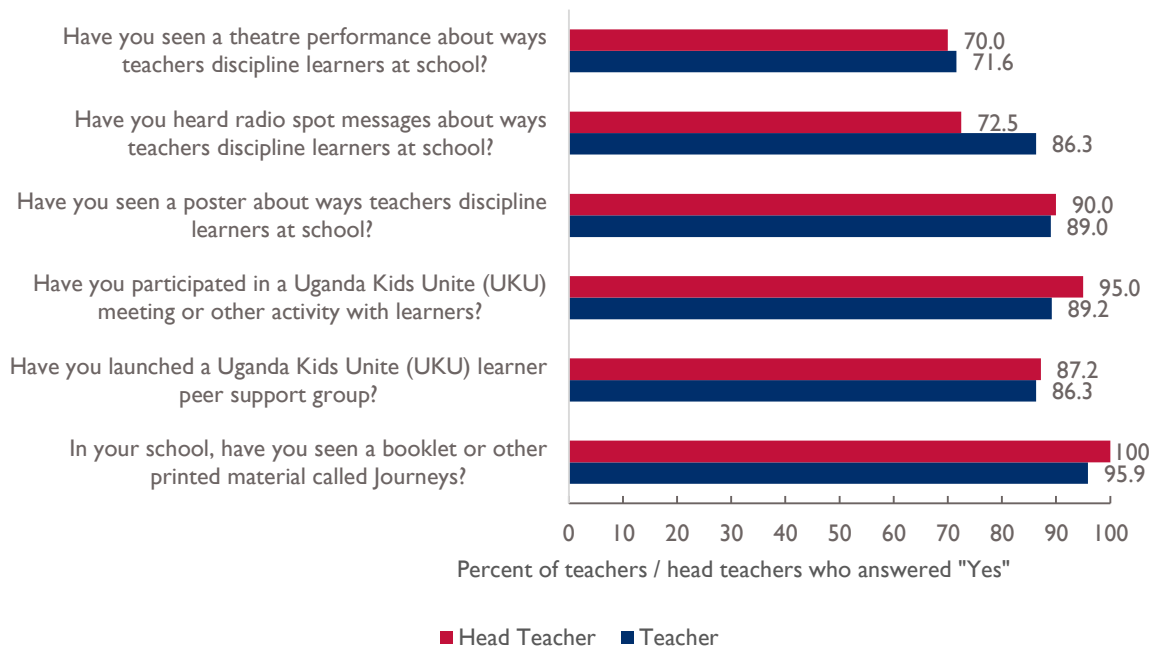
TYPE OF TRAINING	AVERAGE PERCENT OF T2 TEACHERS THAT RECEIVED THE TRAINING
LARA Change Agent training	41%
LARA SRGBV lead facilitator training	13%
LARA SRGBV training of trainers	5%
LARA SRGBV compliance training	3%
LARA SRGBV referral web case management training	3%
LARA UKU Teacher Patron training (violence prevention for pupils)	77%

Note: categories are not mutually exclusive, a teacher could have received more than one type of training.

Indicators on implementation for teachers and head teacher show higher rates of familiarity with Journeys materials and experience with Uganda Kids Unite groups (Figure 1). Over 85 percent of teachers and head teachers reported having seen Journeys materials in their schools, launching a Uganda

Kids Unite learner peer support group, and participating in a Uganda Kids Unite meeting or similar activity with learners.

**Figure 1. LARA SRGBV activities implemented in T2 schools, teachers and head teachers**



During FGDs, teachers in both language areas indicated some familiarity with Journeys and UKU. In KII, however, teachers saw limitations in the capacity of Journeys to contribute to bringing about a positive, safe learning environment for learning in that many only received Journeys handbooks in English. This led to some inconsistencies in comprehension and implementation fidelity of the content. Teachers recommended that LARA provide Journeys in local languages for teachers, pupils, and communities.

Key informants recognized widely that there was not enough time for teachers to go through training covering all Journeys and UKU activities to master them. Too many activities were covered in too short of periods. Teachers also did not have sufficient time and space within the expected program duration to implement activities, which led to skipping and missing steps. Follow-up training on Journeys was seen as too short, only one to three days, with one subcounty workshop per term engaging teachers, and a once-per-term training of head teachers by CCTs that also focuses in EGR supportive supervision and training. Teachers were concerned that CCTs do not have time, funding, or technical capacity to facilitate adequate training. Further, teachers felt they lacked materials, with one school only having seven copies of Journeys for pupils in a school of several hundred.

District officials support supervision visits to schools to support SRGBV activities were not happening as frequently as expected, according to LARA staff. School staff corroborated this saying that they expected to have more support supervision visits and ongoing technical support on SRGBV prevention and response through implementing Journeys activities. District officials explained that one District Inspector cannot reach all schools in one term, only about half. As they are expected to conduct inspections across primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions, they must select some at each level, with a focus on government and few private institutions.

## JOURNEYS PROGRAM

Teachers reported that the Journeys Program identified change agents within their schools. Following this, teachers report having conducted meetings with caregivers to discuss the safety of children. Caregivers who are involved in meetings become aware of danger zones their children encounter to and from school, as teachers and caregivers agree on the appropriate times for learners to be released from school. This was a key concern for caregivers at baseline, who expressed concerns about their children leaving school too late in the day.

Teachers and caregivers felt that the Journeys program fostered more communication between teachers and caregivers about learner safety. Teachers also reported that the Journeys program had positive impacts on child protection reporting procedures. Teachers in both language areas found the inclusion of community members and Local Councils (LCs) improved knowledge around reporting procedures, and allowed teachers, community members, and government entities to work more cohesively.

*”There are many things in that Journeys books for the teachers. But it is not only for the teachers because it even involves the community, the reverend, the chairpersons LC 1<sup>12</sup>, which has helped us to know much about the child and a safe school. So in case of anything, now a child can be able to go and report even to the LCI Chairperson in case of any problem.”*

Senior Female Teachers, FGD, RR District

Female teachers in both language areas reported that Journeys facilitated improved accountability for teachers engaging in harsh corporal punishment or sexual harassment of learners. Specifically, senior female teachers felt more empowered to hold male colleagues accountable for sexual harassment. In these instances, senior female teachers felt that their male colleagues were more open to critical feedback and more willing to collaborate on ensuring learner safety.

KIIs with school staff who had received Journeys training confirmed that they acquired new knowledge and communication skills for interacting with learners. A head teacher summarized what they learned through Journeys as, “When you take away corporal punishment, school becomes friendly to pupils.” Head teachers and teachers felt that if support from LARA were continued, then greater impacts could have been achieved. LARA staff also highlighted that Journeys provides teachers with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, yet there are challenges in internalizing and practicing these skills within a standalone program not integrated into the education system curriculum or teacher continuing professional development:

*“If we are to prevent VACiS, we are dealing with the human heart. How can we deal with people who don’t want to change their heart? Change has to start with me. I [as a teacher] should be able to control myself and talk to learners, not raise my hand against them. I want teachers and adults to be stronger to use SEL skills to change themselves, so that they model what they want children to do. We’re used to ordering children around. How can we incorporate SEL into teacher training and office work?”* (LARA technical staff member, KII)

*“I really want to see things change on SRGBV, but things aren’t changing. I care about this.”* (LARA technical staff member, KII)

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<sup>12</sup> Local Council I (LC I) is the lowest level of local elected government within the district, and is responsible for a village, or in the case of towns or cities, a neighborhood.

Teachers positively perceived the approach of forming UKU groups of learners to collectively work through Journeys materials for pupils with the support of a teacher patron. District officials felt that LARA training, using Journeys, enabled both teachers and learners to identify different types of violence, which, in turn, allowed teachers and learners to track and report incidences of SRGBV. It did not, however, allow for enough time for participants to dialogue through and internalize new knowledge and skills for sustainably shifting attitudes, beliefs, practices, and norms concerning SRGBV.

Ministry officials also felt that the Journeys handbooks were designed to promote reflection among teachers and caregivers on actions in need of change, and that a reflective approach, “helps a lot.” Officials further added that LARA’s direct engagement with school staff helped a lot with addressing school staff perpetration of violence against children. They further highlighted how Journeys: “[...] helped to increase children’s awareness of what’s happening to them. Sometimes, they don’t know an act is violence. ‘Now they can tell: This is dangerous. This person is not a good friend.’ This, however, requires continuity of LARA.”

LARA activities to build community capacity for cultivating a positive and supportive learning environment for learners in schools and their communities focused more on the establishment of VCCMCs to respond to cases of SRGBV in schools (see discussion above under “Outcomes of Interest”), rather than training on and implementation of Journeys activity handbook for communities. A LARA technical staff member stated that:

*“If had to do it over again, I would not include the community impact of Journeys because it’s problematic to implement. Activities need to build one on the other. Community attendance is difficult to get consistently. Different people come every time. Community implementation is problematic because it is not building on one activity to the next. It is preaching to different cohorts.”* (LARA technical staff member, KII)

Ministry officials also valued the fact that LARA engaged communities and caregivers as key stakeholders, working to help them reflect on their actions. Ministry officials recognized how the prevention of violence against children requires teachers, schools, and the community to work together to increase child protection and safety.

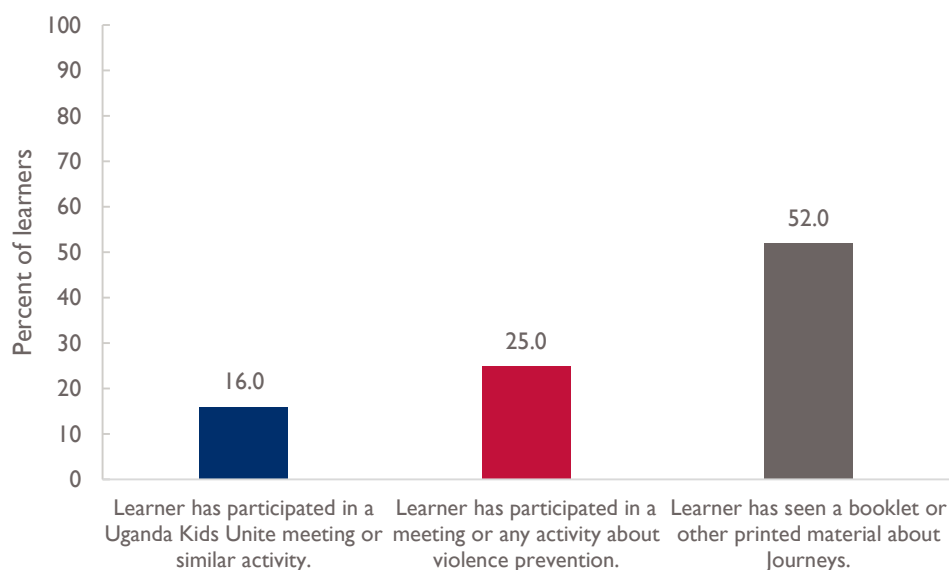
*“Before everyone had responsibility for child development in a community, now caregivers are alone. With Journeys, we all have a role to play. You can disseminate key policy documents, but people don’t read. We do though have laws and policies that protect children. We have our own laws here in Uganda. It’s not another force pushing.”* (Ministry Official, KII)

District officials, however, thought that LARA activities on Journeys were relevant in that they contributed to more “gender-friendly environments,” life-skills building, including problem-solving, as well as reading, pupil retention, violence tracking in schools, and community mobilization. District officials expected schools to keep quarterly documentation on SRGBV reports and prevention and response activities in an Inspection File, yet based on performance evaluation findings and the RTI LARA AMELP for Year Four, school-level documentation has been lacking. Caregivers also perceived that Journeys had positive benefits on school safety and their relationships with teachers. Female caregivers felt that learners were being disciplined less harshly, with teachers using “more acceptable methods of corporal punishment.”

## UGANADA KIDS UNITE

Participation in Uganda Kids Unite (UKU) or violence prevention activities, and seeing printed materials about Journeys are statistically significant and larger in T2 schools than in T1 schools, as expected. However, the percentage of T2 learners that participated in these activities is low, and just over half of them have seen Journeys materials (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. LARA SRGBV activities implemented in T2 schools, learners**



A factor that might explain low levels of UKU undertakings is that Journeys and UKU activities were seen by teachers as extracurricular and outside of teachers' responsibilities to deliver the national curriculum. Teachers interviewed highlighted a lack of additional pay to cover teacher change agents' time preparing and carrying out Journeys activities to train other teachers and to serve as teacher patrons for UKU Groups. The lack of pay for extra activities and demands on teachers' time was seen as unsustainable. Teachers were busy already preparing lesson plans and trying to ensure that their classes produced academic results, which are subject to district-level inspection.

In addition, LARA staff flagged the issue of Journeys activities lacking material resources in schools for pupils; UKU sessions needed paper, markers, etc., and these materials are not provided in schools, making difficult the implementation of activities.

Despite evidence of low estimated participation in UKU groups (16% of pupils), and participation in a meeting or any other activity focused on violence (25% of pupils), teachers perceived (in 4 of the 6 schools visited by the PE team) that the UKU group activities using the Journeys Activity Handbook for Pupils contributed to a more positive school climate. Teachers observed how participating "children turned to the [UKU] group to seek solutions to their problems" (Woman teacher, P4, KII) and highlighted how pupils spoke more freely with teachers and trusted them now that teachers knew how to speak in a friendlier manner with learners.

Findings from FGDs seem to indicate that UKU has had some benefits for teachers and learners. Teachers felt more knowledgeable about resources in the community responsible for children's welfare.

Learners were also aware of the resources in the community, but remained more trusting of the teachers in the school they previously identified. Teachers and learners reported that UKU groups allowed learners to speak more freely about issues that were taking place at home. Teachers felt that they could more openly talk to learners about their absences, and express concerns about performance. Some learners also felt that they could confide in teachers:

*I may need shoes but my mother cannot afford to buy me shoes, yet I am contemplating going to dig for someone to get money, and yet that would mean that I miss class. So the [UKU] group members can contribute to my cause and put money together so that I can at least buy the really cheap shoes in the meantime while your parent tries to find the money. (Girl, FGD, L district)*

Teachers also reported that having better knowledge of learners' home environments enabled them to better understand the reasons why a learner may be exhibiting behavioral issues, or be absent from school. In these cases, teachers reported being less likely to use harsh disciplinary methods for infractions related to tardiness.

*Each time you sit with your family, they can easily share with you their challenges. For example, that maybe we don't eat supper, or I arrive late at school because it is me who does the morning housework at home, so you get to understand that this child is coming to school late but not because of their own making but because the problem is at home. Instead of sending them to school, they tell them to do other things. So you get to know the challenges the child is facing. (Senior Male Teacher, FGD, L district)*

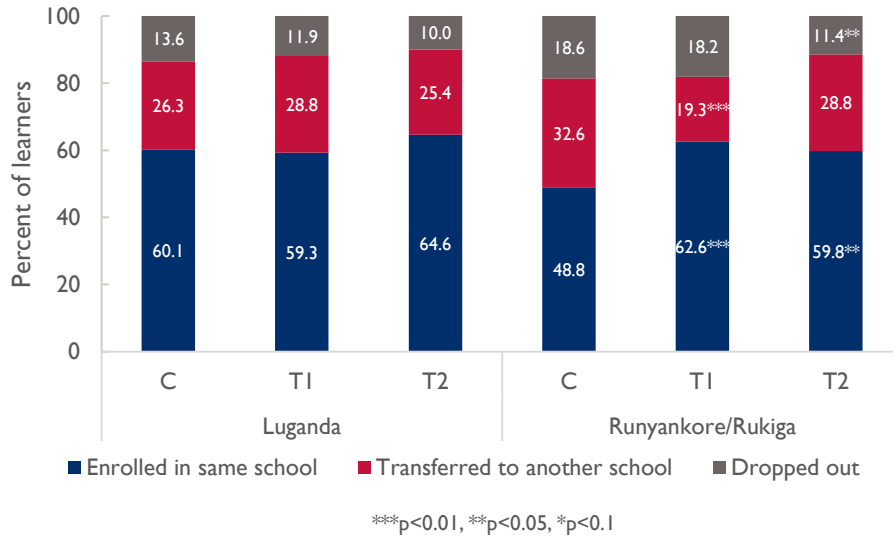
## **4.2 RETENTION AND ATTENDANCE FINDINGS (R&A)**

Establishing a positive and supportive school climate and strengthening SRGBV prevention and response at school and in communities should increase the retention and attendance of pupils.

The following findings summarize data from the panel of 3,502 learners that we followed during eight waves of data collection in terms 2 and 3 of 2017 (called 'Y1T2' and 'Y1T3', respectively), terms 1, 2, and 3 of 2018 (called 'Y2T1', 'Y2T2', and 'Y2T3', respectively), and terms 1, 2, and 3 of 2019 (called 'Y3T1', 'Y3T2', and 'Y3T3', respectively). The panel of learners was created at baseline (term 1 of 2017 or 'Y1T1'), when the learners were enrolled in P1 and P4. During the 2018 school year, R&A was being primarily carried out in P2 and P5 classrooms where most of the learners in our panel were found. In 2019, R&A was mainly conducted in P3 and P6 classrooms, but we also visited P2 and P5 classrooms to locate learners who were not promoted. In addition, we also monitored the attendance of 142 teachers assigned to the sampled learners.

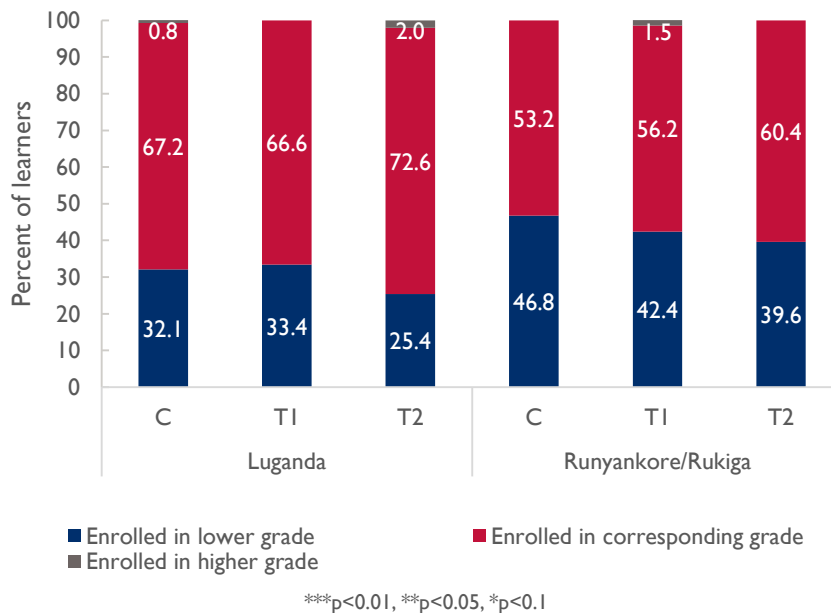
We find statistically significant differences in the learners' enrollment status by treatment group in Y3T3 – the last wave – among the Runyankore/Rukiga language area schools, but the data does not suggest important differences between treatment groups in the Luganda language area schools. Figure 3 shows that learners in T1 and T2 Runyankore/Rukiga area schools tend to stay enrolled in the original school at significantly higher rates than those from control schools. By Y3T3, 49 percent of learners in control schools remain enrolled in their original school, while the percentage for T1 and T2 is around 14 and 11 percentage points higher respectively. Moreover, pupils in T1 schools are significantly less likely to transfer to other schools, and learners from T2 schools are significantly less likely to drop out, compared to those from control schools. One MoES official interviewee mentioned that some dropouts are re-enrolling in treatment schools when they hear about how the program is working.

**Figure 3. Learners' enrollment status in Y3T3 by treatment group and region**



At baseline, in 2017, all learners were enrolled in P1 or P4 classes. For those that remained enrolled in the same schools, we were able to calculate grade retention. If all learners in the sample would have been promoted to the next grades, they should be attending P2 and P5 in 2018, and P3 and P6 in 2019; this group is defined as 'enrolled in the corresponding grade.' However, we observe that some learners were not promoted and they are categorized as 'enrolled in lower grade.' We also observe a small fraction of learners enrolled in a grade higher than the corresponding grade, and we classify them as 'enrolled in higher grade'. Figure 4 shows that there are no statistically significant differences in grade repetition by treatment group by Y3T3 in either region.

**Figure 4. Grade retention in Y3T3 by treatment group and region**

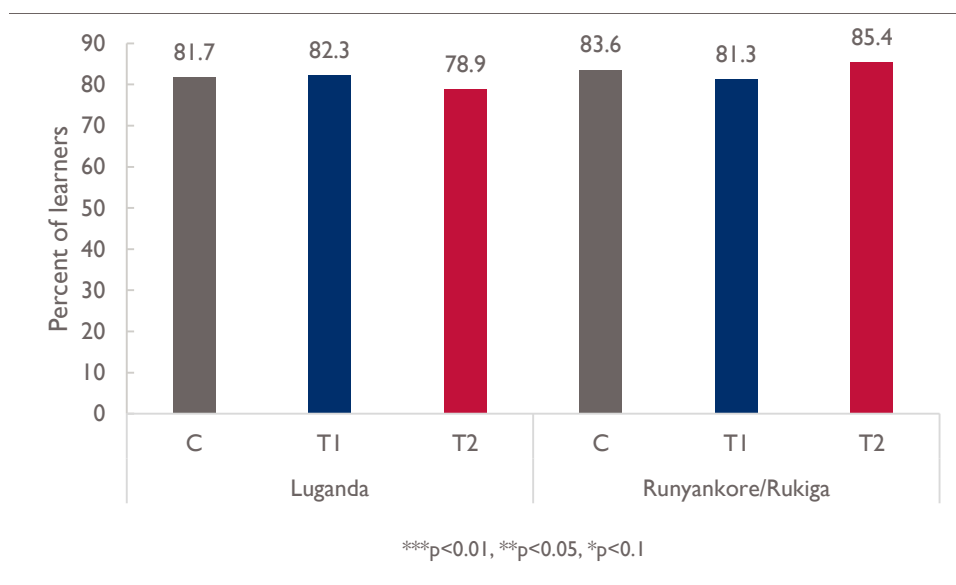




On average, 82 percent of learners still enrolled in the original school<sup>13</sup> were present in class during our unannounced visits.

Absenteeism remains high among learners and unchanged since baseline. Figure 5 shows an average attendance rate of 81 percent in the Luganda speaking region and 83 percent in the Runyankore/Rukiga speaking region. We do not find statistically significant differences when comparing attendance rates by treatment groups in each language area.

**Figure 5. Learners’ average attendance by treatment group and region**

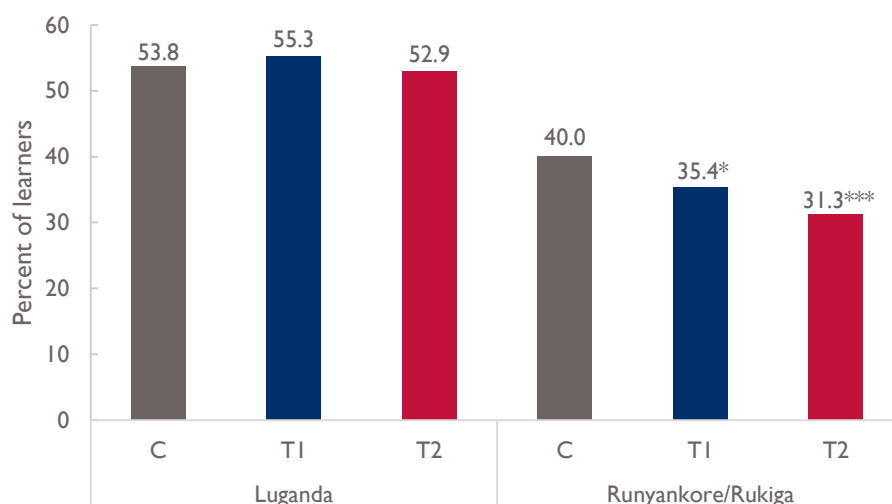


In addition, during our learners’ interviews, we asked them if they missed one or more days of schools in the week previous to the interview.

Figure 6 shows that, on average, 44 percent of learners answered affirmatively, which was consistent with the data from unannounced visits findings; absenteeism was significantly higher in the Luganda (54 percent) than in the Runyankore/Rukiga (36 percent) region. We also observe that self-reported absenteeism is lower in T1 (35 percent) and T2 (31 percent) schools, compared to control schools (40 percent), in the Runyankore/Rukiga region. There are no differences in the Luganda region.

<sup>13</sup> Attendance rates only consider learners enrolled in PI or a higher grade, and employ the data collected in the eight school terms covered so far.

**Figure 6. Learner self-reports being absent at least one school day on the week before the survey, by treatment and region**



\*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

Around half (50 percent) of those who were absent at least one day on the week before the survey stated that they missed school because of an illness (Table ). Another important reason was staying at home doing work, a category mentioned by 22 percent of those who were absent. This is consistent with statements from KII respondents, who mentioned that absences tend to be highest during planting and harvesting seasons or market days

**Table 10. Learners’ reasons for not attending school<sup>1</sup>**

REASON	PERCENT OF LEARNERS
Was sick	50.0
Working at home	21.5
Had to take care of siblings	6.5
Bad weather	3.0
Customs/festivals	2.8
Did not have books or other school materials	2.2
Attended a funeral	2.2
Unpaid school fees	2.1
Other	10.5

<sup>1</sup> only for those who self-reported being absent at least one day on the week before the survey

In the FGDs, caregivers widely mentioned that it is important for their children to attend school regularly. However, it is understood that there are occasions where a child must not attend school. The most commonly cited reasons for a child’s absenteeism include lack of money for school fees (all FGDs), although only 2 percent of the children reported this as a reason in our interviews. Caregivers also mentioned bad weather (five FGDs), fear of corporal punishment at school (five FGDs), deaths in the community, peer pressure to not attend school, dirty uniforms, caregivers needing assistance at home, teacher absenteeism, and domestic violence.

In Klls school staff noted that widespread poverty and needs for household economic strengthening affected pupil enrollment, attendance, and retention.

*“Boys, in particular, are affected by casual work at home with matoke and cattle. Parents say, “This is how I can earn a living.” I cannot stop a parent from earning a living. Parents are very poor, and cannot afford notebooks, scholastic books, pens. Children, therefore, are not confident.” (Head Teacher, Kll).*

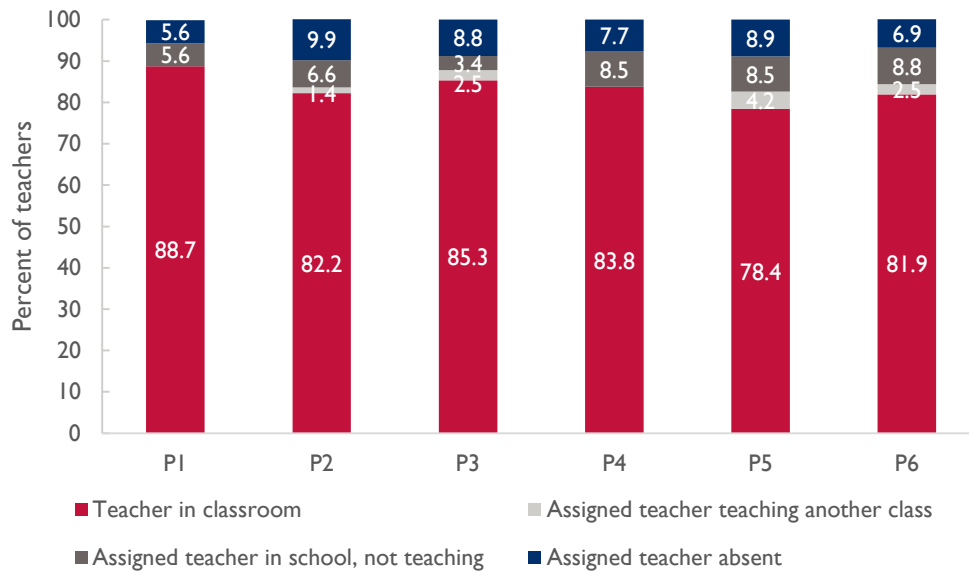
School staff further highlighted how girls’ and boys’ school absenteeism increased in the rainy season when they were expected to work to sow seeds and pull weeds. Critically, head teachers and teachers raised the issue of menstrual hygiene management, and the lack of resources to provide girls with sanitary pads to help them remain in school. Girls lacking transportation to and from school, experience safety risks on the way to and from school, when motortaxi (bodaboda) drivers try and convince them “to go to discos and other recreational places.” This contributes to girls’ school dropout through absenteeism and early pregnancy.

In Klls ministry officials felt that LARA contributed to improved enrollment, attendance, and retention rates, and reductions in dropout due to the program encouraging learners, “to keep coming.” Some highlighted how children who had previously dropped out of school ended up re-enrolling due to the materials and activities of the LARA program, often referring to the presence of EGR books as a motivating factor. Some of these opinions are corroborated by the evidence in the Runyankore/Rukiga area but not in the Luganda language dominant region.

During the R&A unannounced visits, the field team also monitors the attendance of sampled learners’ teachers. Thus, we checked the attendance status of the teachers assigned to P1 and P4 in 2017, P2 and P5 in 2018, and P3 and P6 in 2019.

Figure 7 shows that, on average, slightly over 80 percent of classrooms visited had a teacher present during instruction time. In the rest of the cases, the teacher was somewhere else in the school – in another classroom or not – or absent. We do not find significant differences between the teachers’ attendance status by treatment group in either region.

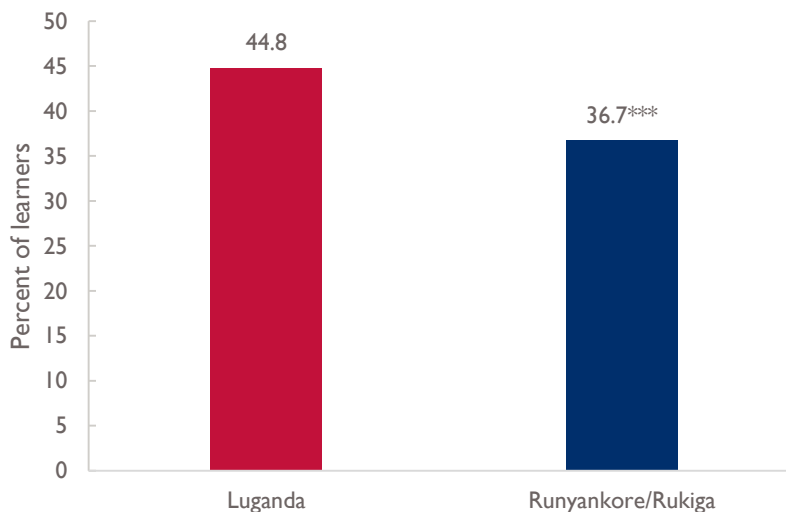
**Figure 7. Teachers' attendance status by grade**



\*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

When we asked the pupils, 41 percent of them reported that teachers did not come to school one or more days on the week before the survey. Teacher absenteeism, as reported by learners, was significantly higher in the Luganda (45 percent) than in the Runyankore/Rukiga (37 percent) region. We do not find statistically significant differences between the treatment groups and the control group.

**Figure 8. Learners report teacher was absent at least one school day the week before the survey**



\*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

In the KIIs, the most frequent reasons cited by head teachers for teacher absenteeism were the illness of the teacher or a family member, or death of a family member. Additionally, MoES officials mentioned

teachers' low motivation to attend school every day due to low salaries and/or head teachers' disengagement.

In the FGDs, caregivers had mixed perceptions as to the frequency of teacher absenteeism. While they noted that teachers are frequently absent from the school, there are also cases where teacher absenteeism has been said to decline. Two group discussions mentioned that teacher absenteeism has recently declined after caregivers brought up the issue in school meetings and after the intervention of head teachers. According to caregivers, contributing factors to teacher absenteeism include apathy, sickness, the loss of a loved one, training in another town, family issues, and prioritization of personal businesses during school hours. Caregivers in all FGDs noted that sometimes when teachers are absent, substitutes teach their classes and children are not sent home. Often these are other teachers in the school or the head teacher. Participants in all FGDs feel that teacher absenteeism negatively affects their child's reading progress. However, while it is a widely recognized problem, caregivers do not always feel like it is easy to confront teachers regarding their habits. One respondent expresses a fear that remarking on teacher absenteeism would bring retribution to the children:

*Some teachers are rude and very tough on children, especially when children report that the teachers are missing from school on that particular day. When we follow up as parents, our children are victimized. So to keep our children safe, we decide to keep quiet. But teacher absenteeism is high. Some teachers can take a period of one week when they are away from school. And when they come to school, they do not explain work to the children well and this leaves our children missing (sic) simply because they do not understand the work. (Female Caregiver, FGD, RR District)*

#### **4.3 EARLY GRADE READING PROFICIENCY FINDINGS**

The NORC evaluation team assessed P3 learners' reading performance in T1, T2, and control schools in October 2019. In treatment schools, P3 learners that were promoted to the next grade every year have been exposed to LARA interventions since they started P1 in 2017. We examine 10 EGRA subtasks: (1) letter-sound identification fluency in local language, (2) letter-sound identification fluency in English, (3) segmenting, (4) non-word reading fluency in a local language, (5) oral reading fluency (ORF) in a local language, (6) ORF in English, (7) reading comprehension in a local language, (8) reading comprehension in English, (9) listening comprehension in local language, and (10) vocabulary in English. We assessed the effects of the T1 and T2 interventions separately for the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga samples.

Table 11 shows, for each EGRA subtask, the average scores in T1 schools, and the score differences between T1 and control schools, and the corresponding effect size<sup>14</sup>. These differences indicate the effect of the T1 intervention (i.e. LARA EGR intervention). We also show the average scores for T2 schools as well as the scores differences between T2 and T1 schools and the corresponding effect size. In this case, the differences show the additional effect that the T2 intervention (i.e. LARA SRGBV intervention) had on learners' reading performance was above and beyond the T1 intervention effect. We show effects separately by language group.

We find positive effects of T1 on most subtasks. The exceptions are oral reading fluency for the Luganda group, and reading comprehension in English, listening comprehension and vocabulary in English for both

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<sup>14</sup> The effect size is calculated as the difference between the T1 and control groups over the pooled standard deviation of the groups at midline.

the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga groups Learners from T1 schools perform significantly better than their peers from control schools in terms of correct local language letter sounds per minute (effect size of 0.91 and 0.54 in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga, respectively) and correct English letter sounds per minute (effect size of 0.81 and 0.62 in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga, respectively). We observe the same in the case of the percentage of correct phonemes (effect size of 0.26 and 0.18 in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga, respectively) and correct non-words per minute (effect size of 0.49 and 0.37 in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga, respectively).

The impacts of the EGR intervention are also significant in oral reading fluency (effect size of 0.54 and 0.42 in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga, respectively) and reading comprehension (effect size of 0.51 and 0.37 in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga, respectively) in local languages, but we find mixed results for the same subtasks in English. While there is no impact of T1 on reading comprehension in English, there is a positive and significant effect on oral reading fluency in English only for the Runyankore/Rukiga group (effect size of 0.2).

We find no significant effects of the T1 intervention on English vocabulary in the Runyankore/Rukiga language region, and that learners in control schools outperform those in T1 schools in the Luganda language region (effect size of -0.3). Finally, we do not find significant effects of the EGR intervention on listening comprehension for either language group.

**Table 11. EGRA Effects on P3 Learners**

EGRA SUBTASK	T1			T2		
	AVERAGE T1 SCHOOLS	INCREASE OVER CONTROL SCHOOLS	EFFECT SIZE	AVERAGE T2 SCHOOLS	INCREASE OVER T1 SCHOOLS	EFFECT SIZE
<b>Luganda</b>						
Letter sound (clspm) LL	16.6	10.3***	0.91	13.9	-2.7*	-0.23
Letter sound (clspm) EN	18.2	10.8***	0.81	16.0	-2.2	-0.16
Segmenting (% correct)	72.8	9.9***	0.26	73.1	0.3	0.01
Non-word reading (cnwpm) LL	12.4	5.0***	0.49	12.7	0.3	0.03
Oral read. fluency (cwpm) LL	17.2	7.2***	0.54	17.7	0.6	0.04
Oral read. fluency (cwpm) EN	22.7	2.9	0.16	24.2	1.5	0.08
Reading Comp (% correct) LL	27.1	11.6***	0.51	26.9	-0.2	-0.01
Reading Comp (% correct) EN	21.9	0.1	0.01	25.5	3.6	0.13
Listening Comp (% correct) LL	91.5	-0.3	-0.02	93.4	1.8**	0.12
Vocabulary (% correct) EN	57.1	-4.2***	-0.30	58.2	1.1	0.08
<b>Runyankore/Rukiga</b>						
Letter sound (clspm) LL	10.5	4.4***	0.54	12.8	2.4*	0.23

EGRA SUBTASK	T1			T2		
	AVERAGE T1 SCHOOLS	INCREASE OVER CONTROL SCHOOLS	EFFECT SIZE	AVERAGE T2 SCHOOLS	INCREASE OVER T1 SCHOOLS	EFFECT SIZE
Letter sound (clspm) EN	9.7	5.6***	0.62	11.3	1.7	0.15
Segmenting (% correct)	64.6	7.2**	0.18	66.9	2.3	0.06
Non-word reading (cnwpm) LL	9.2	3.5***	0.37	10.7	1.6	0.15
Oral read. fluency (cwpm) LL	15.4	5.6***	0.42	17.5	2.0	0.14
Oral read. fluency (cwpm) EN	24.5	3.8**	0.20	28.7	4.3**	0.22
Reading Comp (% correct) LL	30.4	10.0***	0.37	34.3	3.9	0.13
Reading Comp (% correct) EN	18.8	2.4	0.10	25.9	7.1***	0.29
Listening Comp (% correct) LL	93.1	1.1	0.07	94.3	1.2	0.08
Vocabulary (% correct) EN	54.1	-1.3	-0.11	58.2	4.2***	0.32

Legend: LL: Local language, EN: English, clspm: correct letter sounds per minute, cnwpm: correct non-words per minute, cwpm: correct words per minute.

Notes: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Effect size calculated as the difference between T1 and the control group (or T1 and T2) over the pooled standard deviation of the groups at midline.

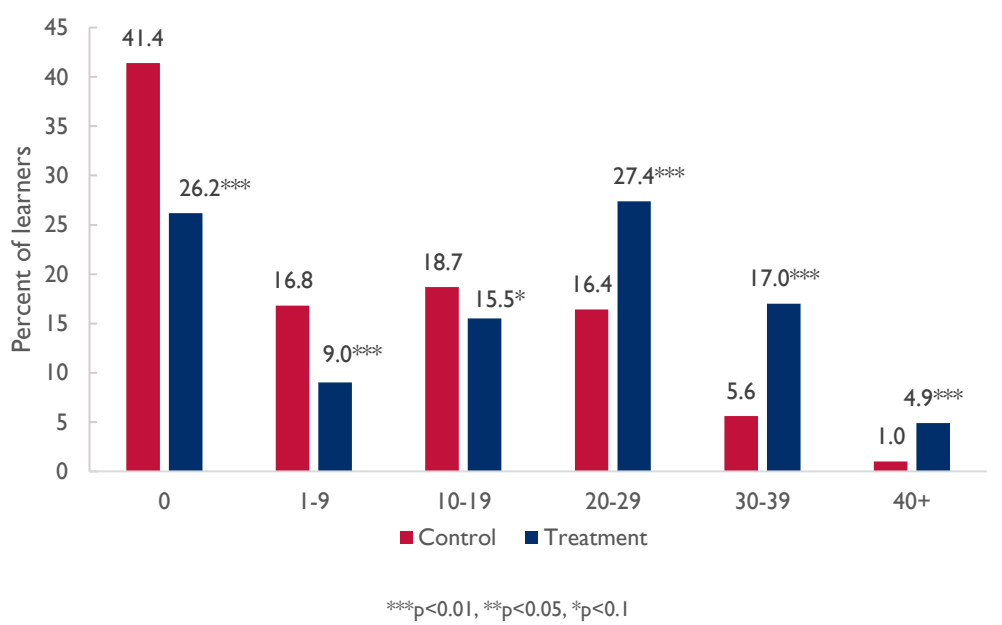
In general, we find no additional effects on learners' reading performance due to the T2 intervention. Most differences between the T1 and T2 schools are not significant. This means that the SRGBV intervention does not provide an additional contribution to better reading outcomes above the EGR intervention alone. This is perhaps not too surprising given that, as we have shown, the LARA SRGBV activities had null or very small effects.

Pooling together the T1 and T2 groups, Figure 9 and

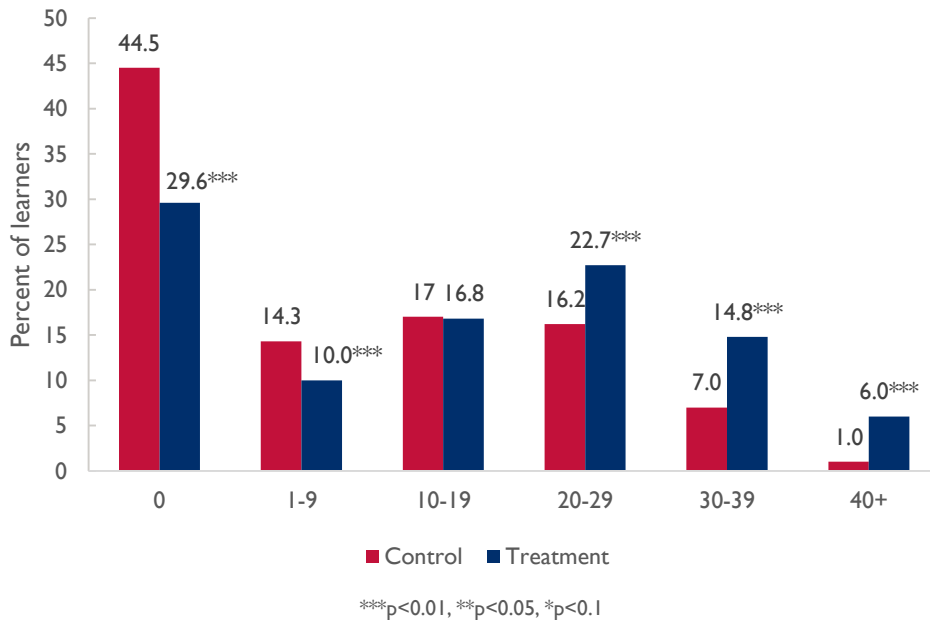
Figure 10 show that 26 and 30 percent of P3 learners in the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga language regions respectively, cannot read a single correct word in the ORF (oral reading fluency) subtask. The percentage of learners from control schools with zero oral reading fluency scores is significantly higher: 41 and 45 in the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga regions, respectively.

The figures also show that the proportion of learners able to read 20 or more correct words per minute is significantly higher in treatment than in schools for both language regions. In the Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga language regions, 49.3 and 43.5 percent of learners in treatment schools read more than 20 words at the end of P3, respectively. The proportion of learners reaching this level is still low but substantially higher than in control schools, where 20.3 and 22.3 percent of P3 learners in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga language regions, respectively, do.

**Figure 9. Oral Reading Fluency (cwpm) in local language at midline, Luganda region**



**Figure 10. Oral Reading Fluency (cwpm) in local language at midline, Runyankore/Rukiga region**



**EGR EFFECTS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS**

In addition, we conducted the above analysis separately for girls and boys. Girls tend to perform slightly better than boys in EGRA subtasks. This was true at baseline and it is also the case at midline. The effects of the LARA program however are similar across groups. We included a detailed analysis of program effects and oral reading fluency performance for girls and boys separately in ANNEX C.



Findings from FGDs indicate that collaboration between teachers and caregivers on learner reading progress has room for improvement. Caregivers had mixed responses as to whether or not they worked together with teachers to discuss the learning progress of their children. Some caregivers say they only go to schools when invited, and that they are brought in only when their children are not doing well or when school fees need to be paid. A number of caregivers also admit that they do not always take the initiative to check their child's performance with teachers. (Five FGDs).

Teachers do not consistently send reports home either. While most caregivers say they received some reports from teachers, and some noted that receiving progress reports was contingent on whether or not school fees were paid. Caregivers in two FGDs note that quality of instruction may improve with better treatment of teachers by the schools.

*"I can add that on teacher payment; teachers have to be paid in time because teachers cannot concentrate on the child when they are not paid well."* (Female Caregiver, FGD L District)

*"As one of my fellow parents spoke, I totally agree with the option and believe that our teachers need to be given good care because this translates into the teaching our children well."* (Female Caregiver, FGD L District)

## **EVIDENCE OF FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY GRADE READING ACTIVITIES**

In this section, we answer two main questions across all EGR activities undertaken by LARA. First, were activities carried out as planned and were they sufficient and relevant to achieving RI? Second, what factors accelerated or inhibited achievements of LARA results? Findings here are drawn from both the midline impact evaluation data and final performance evaluation.

### **HEAD TEACHER AND TEACHER TRAINING**

Training head teachers and teachers to improve their reading instruction skills is one of the key activities implemented by LARA. The LARA target for "the number of primary school educators who completed professional development activities on implementing evidence-based reading instruction" was 16,733. As of September 2019, 17,918 teachers had received training in EGR methodology (2019 LARA AMELP, p. 20).

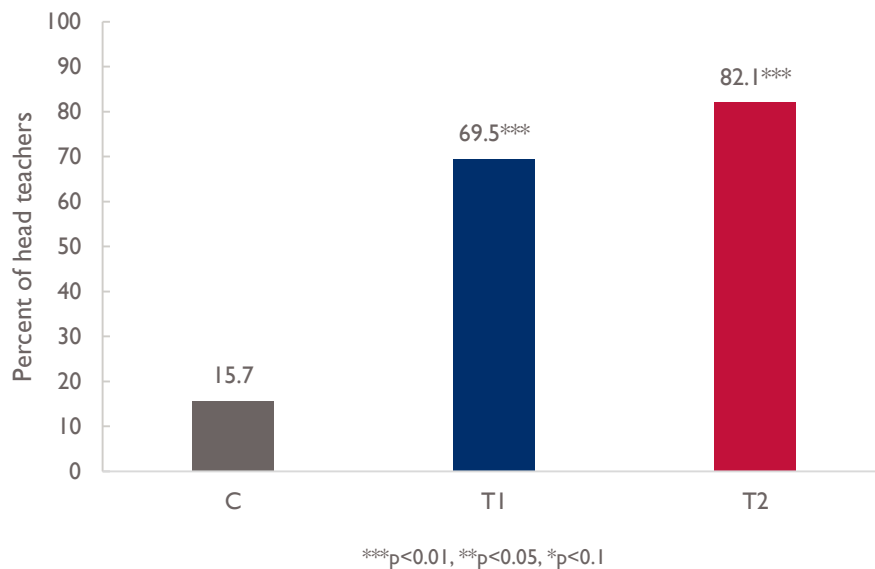
LARA's cascade model started with LARA training the lead facilitators and conducting training-of-trainers' sessions for individuals who would provide training to classroom teachers. Trainers were identified among CCTs, district education staff, pre-service tutors including deputy principal outreach, adding previously trained head teachers and classroom teachers who demonstrated competence in the EGR methodology. The trainers then cascaded the training to classroom teachers, initially training P1, P2, and head teachers in Cluster 1 schools and over the following three years gradually added P3, P4, and deputy head teachers; Cluster 2 teachers starting with P1 and P2 teachers, followed by P3 and P4. Similarly, teachers in Cluster 1 control schools were added in Years 3 and 4. Over time, LARA adapted the program by refining the content and changing the frequency and duration of training from five continuous days to a 3-2-2 program to allow time to absorb the material and time between training sessions to practice. LARA made these changes before training P3 teachers.

Ministry officials in Kampala expressed concern that the quality of the trainers likely had a negative impact on teachers' uptake. They reported that lead facilitators and trainers – selected collaboratively by the Teacher/Tutor, Instructor Education and Training (TIET), LARA, and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – were initially selected more based on their position than relevant skills or interest in becoming trainers. This means that, for example, CCTs may serve as trainers even if they are trained

mathematics or science teachers and have no experience teaching reading or with a particular local language. LARA is well aware of this and has weeded out weaker trainers over time, using those who have demonstrated competence in ERG methodology. LARA has identified ways to improve the training-of-trainers, including adapting training guides to include more scripting.

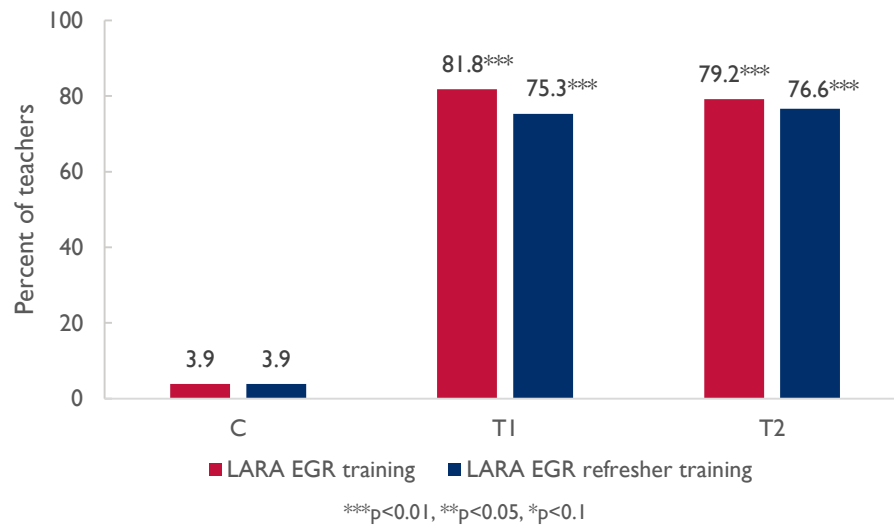
In the interviews conducted by NORC, almost 70 percent of head teachers in T1 schools and 82 percent of head teachers in T2 schools reported their participation in LARA EGR training in 2017 or afterwards (Figure 11). The proportion is significantly lower in the case of head teachers in control schools: 16 percent. Most likely, these head teachers received the MOES/USAID/RTI training when they were head teachers or teachers in a treatment school in previous years.

**Figure 11. Head teacher participation in LARA EGR training**



In the case of P3 teachers, around 80 and 75 percent of treated schools participated in the LARA training and refresher training, respectively (Figure 12). As expected, only a few teachers (3.9 percent) from the control schools have received training from LARA, and the difference in the participation rates between this and the treatment groups is statistically significant.

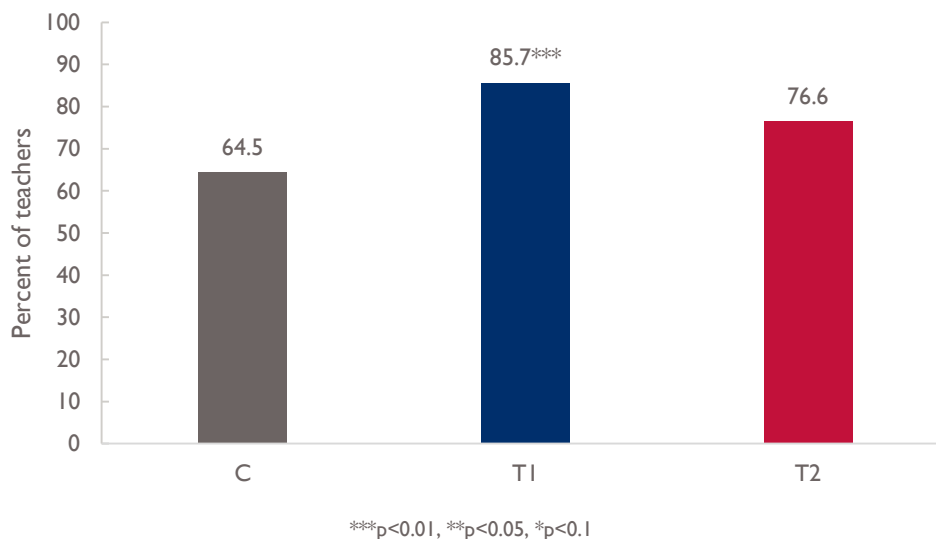
**Figure 12. P3 teacher participation in EGR training and refresher training**



LARA EGR training was conducted in Jan/Feb-2018 or before, and the refresher training was conducted afterwards.

There is some turnover of teachers in the schools. Based on KIIs at the central MoES, districts, and schools, the frequency of transfers is a significant issue, as well as a weak handover/takeover practice in schools. According to head teachers and teachers interviewed, the capacity of the school is weakened when trained teachers are transferred out. We asked P3 teachers if they had taught in the same school in 2018, the year when the teachers in T1 and T2 schools were supposed to receive training from LARA. Figure 13, shows that while 64.5 percent of the teachers in control schools were in the same school in 2018, the figures go up to 85.7 and 76.6 percent in T1 and T2 schools, respectively.

**Figure 13. P3 teachers that taught in same school in 2018**



All participants of the LARA EGR training found it useful and learned new things, according to the P3 teacher survey. Around 93 percent of the respondents who received training from LARA think that the LARA EGR teaching approach is better than their usual approaches, and feel better qualified to teach

EGR after the training. In the KIs, two MoES officials shared that, based on their belief that the EGR program is a success, they are pushing it to be fully integrated into pre-service training offered at Primary Teacher Colleges (PTCs). Another MoES official reported that LARA has participated in the development of the new EGR curriculum at Kyambogo University, but it has not been fully adopted yet.

Almost 99 percent of P3 teachers who participated in the LARA training say that they are implementing the EGR approach in the classroom but the teachers interviewed for the PE were seldom able to articulate what they had learned. One exception is that several teachers remember learning to beat the syllables in words. When prompted, they came up with other things, such as teaching letter names and sounds, repeating a word three times, pointing to pictures, making sounds, and making words.

In general, teachers report that LARA training was too short. Only 15 percent of the P3 teachers that mentioned participating in the LARA EGR training thought that it was long enough. In the KIs with teachers, they mentioned that the training's length was not sufficient for them to absorb all the material and to practice, let alone master it. An inspector highlighted that training for P4 teachers should have been longer to better address the transition issues from the local language in P1-P3 to English as the medium of instruction in P4.

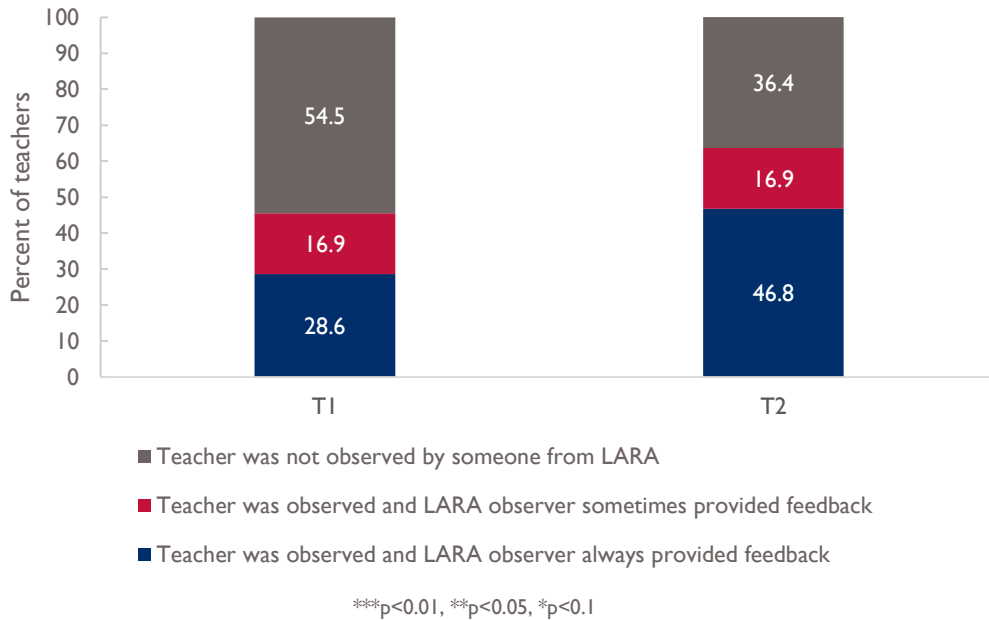
### **TEACHER SUPPORT SUPERVISION**

LARA Field Assistants (FAs), who are former teachers, provide supervisory support and mentorship to primary teachers trained in EGR and are expected to visit teachers in their classrooms once per school term (three times a year in total). However, the LARA team reported that FAs can usually only visit two-thirds of all schools in each term as the number of FAs was reduced and those remaining have different responsibilities.

According to P3 teachers, support supervision by LARA is not widespread in treated schools. Around 45 and 64 percent of teachers in T1 and T2 schools respectively were observed at least once teaching a P3 reading class by someone from LARA in 2019. In all cases, the LARA FAs provided feedback – always or sometimes – about the teachers' instruction practices. The rest of the teachers were not observed at any time during 2019 (

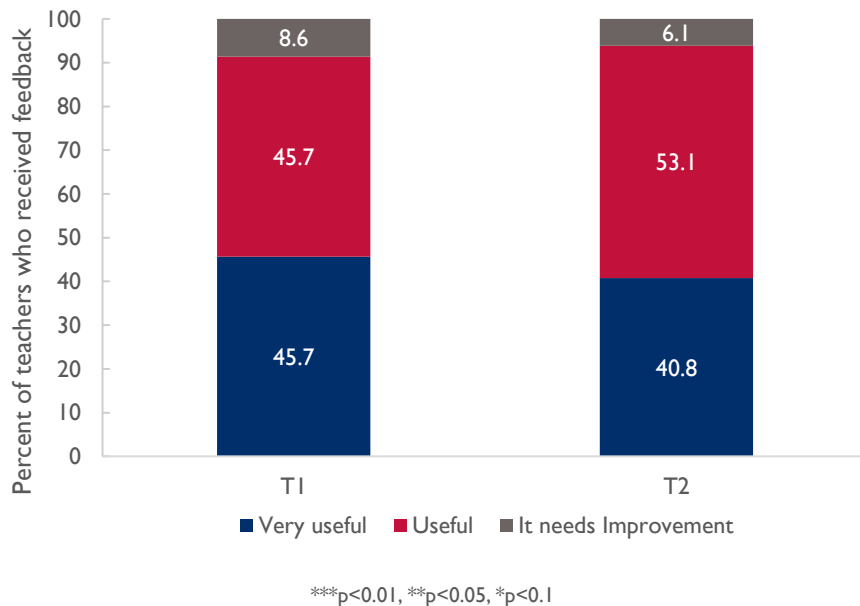
Figure 14).

**Figure 14. LARA EGR support supervision for P3 teachers in 2019**



More than 90 percent of those who received support and advice on teaching reading believed that it was useful or very helpful (Figure 15). On average, 7 percent of the teachers across T1 and T2 schools reported that the feedback offered by the LARA coaches needed improvement.

**Figure 15. Opinion of P3 teachers about LARA EGR support supervision**

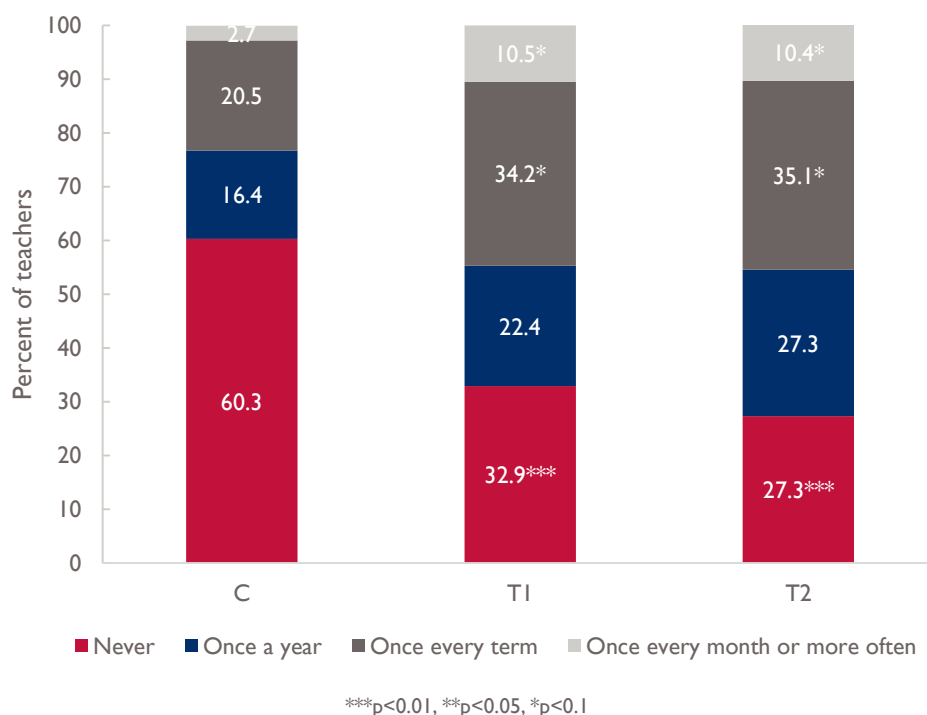


In contrast, 73 percent of head teachers in the treated schools reported that somebody from LARA came to visit the school in every school term of 2019, and only 6 percent reported that nobody from LARA came during the same period. The difference between head teachers and teachers' reports might be explained by the fact that LARA FAs visited schools during 2019 for other reasons than P3 teachers' support, such as observing P4 classes.

In addition to the supervision support provided by LARA directly, the program includes capacity building for district support supervision from CCTs.

Figure 16 shows the frequency in which CCTs observed P3 teachers during 2019. Compared to control schools, T1 and T2 P3 teachers were visited by CCTs more frequently during the year. At least, 70 percent of treatment P3 teachers were observed by CCTs once or more during the year, while this figure is around 40 percent in control schools.

**Figure 16. Frequency that CCTs observed P3 teachers in 2019**



Early in the implementation of LARA, FAs conducted joint monitoring with district education officials to build capacity for support visits. These were widely lauded as successful. At the time of our interviews with KIs, visits from district officials were less common. One teacher noted that the education official occasionally visits, and multiple teachers and head teachers mentioned visits by the district inspector. These inspections look at a wide range of things, including a review of lesson plans, but seldom account for classroom observation. Inspectors complete a form and write a report, and work with the head teacher to develop a school improvement plan. Inspectors also occasionally meet with teachers and share their observations. They rarely have time on their short visits to observe classrooms for any significant amount of time.

The extent to which instructional support agents within the education system are conducting support visits to teachers is related to three main factors, according to KIs: engagement of head teachers, workloads of CCTs and inspectors, and transportation.

Support supervision is a key responsibility of the head teacher, and LARA equipped them to provide such supervision. Head teachers participated in the same LARA EGR training as classroom teachers. However, based on interviews with head teachers and teachers, we found little evidence that they are using that training to support teachers through classroom observation and constructive feedback. The

lack of engagement is evident in the level of absenteeism among head teachers and the fact that many are “caretakers” rather than permanent head teachers.

District officials and the one CCT interviewed reported that CCTs and inspectors must cover a large number of schools for support visits. For CCTs, this is in addition to their other responsibilities, such as providing in-service training. The CCT noted that he covers 23 government and 20 private schools. He typically has 15 days of the month to visit schools, and on a good day he can visit two schools and two teachers at each school. A district inspector noted that he and a colleague cover 78 primary, 20 secondary schools, and two tertiary institutions. Compounding the issue of heavy workloads is transfers and attrition, as many CCTs and inspectors are not active or have retired.

One MoES official noted that there is a renewed focus on improvement, including support supervision, emphasis on quality visits, and improved coordination between the MoES and district education offices.

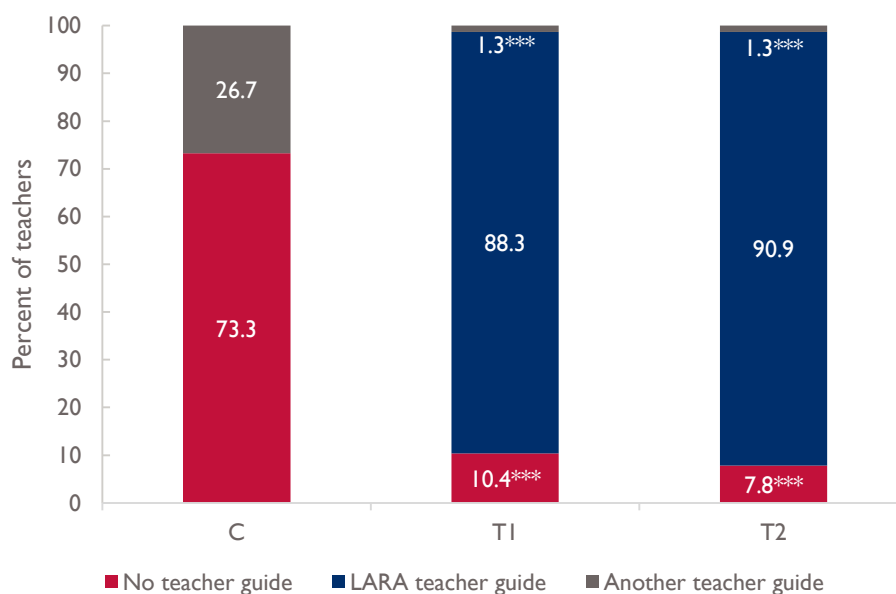
The MoES through the Core PTCs is expected to provide CCTs with motorcycles so they visit schools. Unfortunately, not all CCTs are equipped with a motorcycle or given adequate support to fuel, maintain and repair their motorcycles. A MoES official acknowledged that schools are far apart and many are hard to reach. One CCT escorted the PE team to a school that took more than an hour to reach by car and reported that he was responsible for a school that was even further away. When questioned how far away the school is, he said he did not know because he has never been there.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS**

### **TEACHER GUIDES (TG)**

LARA aims to distribute EGR TGs to all treated teachers. While LARA has generally been able to keep pace with their annual distribution targets, in 2019, they did not meet the target. This was primarily because some teachers did not show up for training where the TGs were distributed (2019 LARA Annual Report). We found that 10 percent of P3 teachers in T1 and T2 schools reported not having them (9 percent had no TG and 1 percent had another type of TG) (Figure 17). Teacher transfers might help to explain this issue as, based on KIIs with schools’ staff, some teachers take teaching and learning materials with them when they leave a school. In control schools, most teachers (almost 3 out of 4) do not have any TG, and no teachers have a LARA EGR TG.

**Figure 17. Printed P3 teacher guide for lesson planning**



\*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

Despite the vast majority of teachers in treatment have a LARA TG, its use in P3 classes is not all too common. In our classroom observation study in 2019, only 9 out of 23 teachers used the LARA TG. This contrasts with what was observed in P1 classrooms in 2018 where 19 out of 24 teachers used the LARA TG during the observed lesson.

Among P3 teachers that have a LARA TG, almost 85 percent expressed a positive opinion – good or very good – of it, while the other 15 percent think the guide is fair or poor. Some teachers mentioned in the KIIs that the guide outlines steps, specifies time allocations, identifies questions, and gives examples. However, there was a general consensus that the LARA TG is not very user-friendly because (1) it requires a lot of cross-referencing within the guide itself, and between the TG and the pupils' book, (2) the steps are too many to be followed easily, (3) the language in the English version is difficult to understand, and (4) it limits the opportunity for teachers' creativity.

Additional shortcomings were identified in the KIIs with teachers regarding the LARA lesson plans for the Literacy Hour that LARA uses (which consists of a half-an-hour of reading and a half-an-hour of writing): 30 minutes a day for reading instruction are not sufficient so they often skip lesson steps and are not able to respond to the needs of learners. According to some MoES officials interviewed, the TG complexities make them overwhelming for teachers. Despite the mentioned weaknesses, 90 percent of the P3 teachers surveyed that have LARA TG responded that they use them every day; the rest use them a few times a week.

The LARA TG training provides scripted lesson plans for each week of the three terms – 11 weeks for each term. In considering the macro pacing of the program, our analysis of classroom observation focused on whether the week in which the lessons were conducted matched the week specified in the LARA program. In 18 P3 treatment classrooms where there was uptake of the training (out of a total of 23), 12 of the lessons were conducted in the LARA-specified week and 6 lessons were one week behind in the program. In general, and despite the LARA TG complexities and shortcomings mentioned by KIIs,



our classroom observations across three years shows that overall adherence to the macro pacing of the program - where there is uptake - was not falling behind the plans too much and has improved over time, albeit measured at different grade levels. However, 9 of the 18 P3 lessons observed followed half or less than half the stipulated lesson steps and only one lesson covered all of the steps. The most commonly covered steps (the only ones covered in more than four of the classrooms) were the song and the teacher reading of the lesson passage aloud. Thus, although there was good adherence to the macro-level pacing of the program, with all lessons within a week of the stipulated week of the program, at the micro-level, there was moderate coverage of the lesson plan steps.

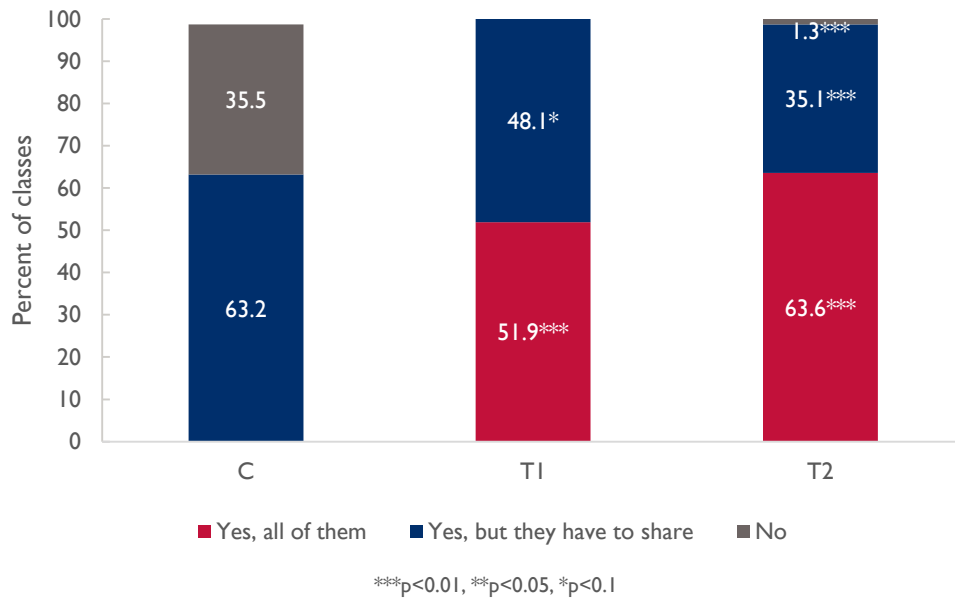
#### PUPIL READING BOOKS

Pupil reading books were supposed to be distributed to every learner enrolled in treatment schools in P1-P4 classes. The end-of-project target for the number of pupil books distributed is 1,976,199 across both cohorts. This includes books for P1-P4 in English and local languages. As of September 2019, LARA had distributed 1,942,497 books, which represents 98 percent of the target. However, we found that for a large proportion of P3 classrooms in T1 and T2 schools, not all children had a reading book (42 percent according to the P3 teachers, and 50 percent directly observed by enumerators). According to the LARA team, the number of learners in treatment schools has increased due to the success of the EGR program, so the classrooms do not have one book per pupil anymore. The same source points out the following as additional factors limiting the availability of reading books: locking up books in the schools—but not in the classrooms—to preserve them, and teachers allegedly taking books with them when they leave the school, and head teachers purportedly taking books (and other teaching and learning materials) to the private schools they own.

According to the teachers, in 35 percent of the P3 classes in control schools, learners have no reading books at all (Figure 18). Most teachers (63 percent) indicated that in their classrooms, they have some type of reader that learners share. The percentage of teachers in treated schools who mentioned that learners have to share or do not have reading books is significantly lower than in control schools but still high: 48 and 36 percent in T1 and T2 schools, respectively. Almost all reading books in P3 treatment classes (99 and 97 percent of classes that have P3 reading books in the language of instruction in T1 and T2 schools, respectively) were brought by LARA.

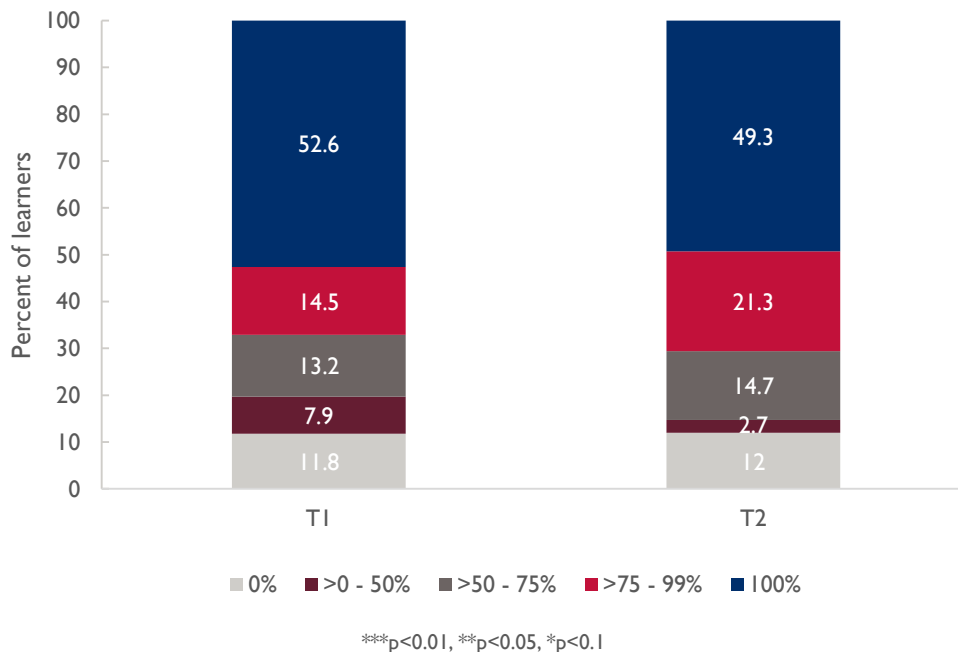
The MoES' policy is to put books in the hands of the pupils. Recognizing that teachers and head teachers want to prevent damage or loss, LARA trained head teachers and SMCs on book care and storage, and that training was cascaded to teachers, pupils, and caregivers. LARA provided each school with a metal box and padlock for storage. The books are numbered and inventoried at the end of each school day before being returned to the storage box. LARA told head teachers not to penalize caregivers if books are damaged or lost. Despite these efforts, there are cases of schools keeping books from pupils to preserve them because they are not sure when they will get new ones. There are also reports of schools enforcing a policy that if a book is damaged or lost, the caregivers have to pay. Because of this, there is a hesitation to take books home even though they might be required for homework.

**Figure 18. Percent of classes where P3 learners have reading books in the language of instruction, as reported by P3 teacher**



NORC enumerators checked the number of reading books in the hands of learners directly by asking learners in P3 treatment classes to hold up their reading books. In around half the classes, all learners had their own LARA reading books, and in 12 percent of the classes, no learners were able to show LARA reading books. In the rest of the P3 classrooms, only a fraction of the learners had their reading books.

**Figure 19. Percent of P3 learners observed having LARA reading books**



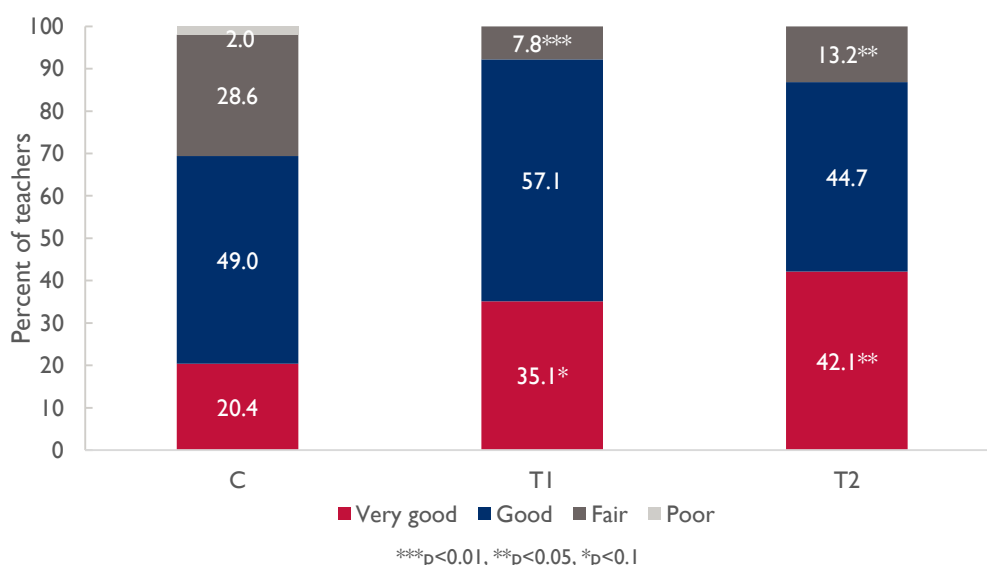
The fraction of learners that did not have the LARA reading book during class time was 25 and 23 percent in T1 and T2 schools, respectively (Table 12). It is unlikely that an increase in enrolment alone explains this gap. Figure 19 shows that around 50 percent of the children with no reading book at hand were in classrooms where no learner had one and another fraction (around 20 percent) were in classrooms where more than half of the learners had no reading book. This fact points to a problem with the distribution of books to the learners, most likely the result of individual school's policies, given that LARA delivered the materials to the schools. The finding also suggests that, although teachers or head teachers that leave the schools may take some materials with them, it is unlikely that they would take all the reading books available when leaving.

**Table 12. Percentage of learners in class that had their LARA reading book**

TREATMENT GROUP	P3 LEARNERS IN CLASS	PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS THAT HAD LARA READING BOOK DURING CLASS (N)
T1 schools	3150	75.0% (2364)
T2 schools	3055	77.3% (2361)

The vast majority of teachers in treatment schools like the LARA reading books. Around 39 percent of P3 teachers in treatment schools think that the reading books available are very good, while a significantly lower share of teachers in control schools (20 percent) believe the same. Similarly, we find that around 10 percent of the P3 teachers in treatment classes think that the reading books available are fair while almost 29 percent of teachers in control schools think that (Figure 20). According to teachers who participated in the KIIs, the LARA reading books are appealing and easy to understand, and they are effective because they incorporate EGR principles in the local languages.

**Figure 20. P3 Teachers' opinion about LARA pupil reading book**



### CONTINUOUS MONITORING ASSESSMENT (CAM) FORMS

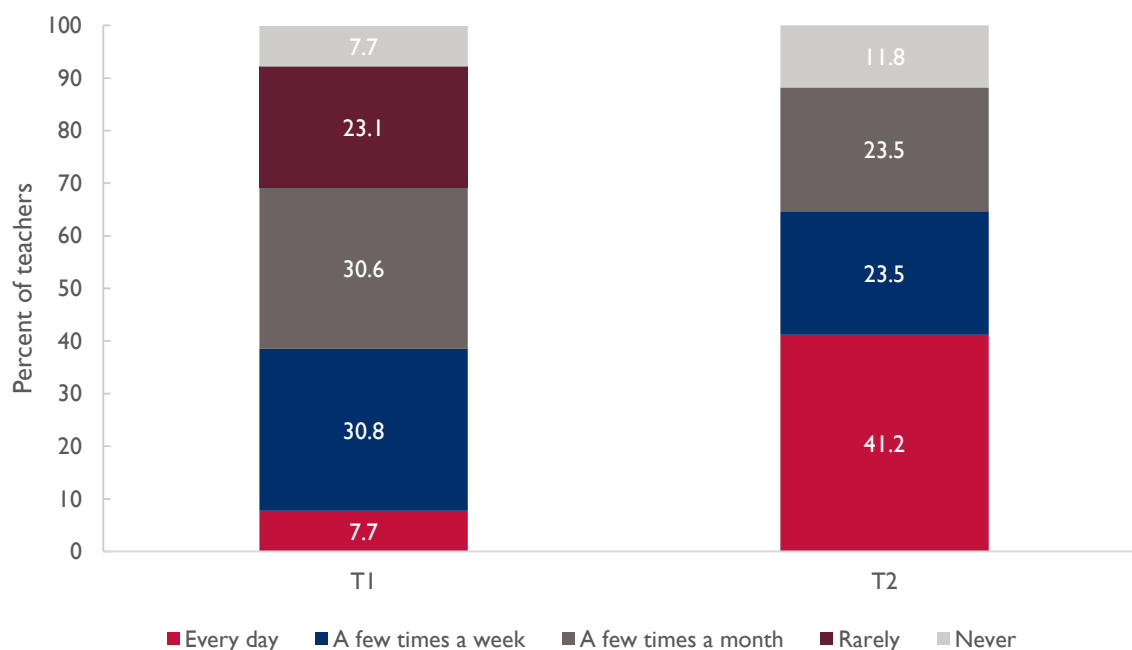
Continuous assessment is meant to inform teacher instruction and guide revision for the learner. The CAM forms are intended to support the teachers' monitoring of learners' progress in reading. LARA teacher training and teacher guides include detailed instructions for CAM forms daily use. However, LARA did not distribute the forms, instead, a model of it was included in the teacher guide that teachers

were supposed to photocopy or use to create their own forms. This may present a difficulty for teachers, but more likely the challenge of conducting individualized, continuous assessment is more likely to be the issue. KIs' opinion is that the forms are lengthy, which makes it challenging for teachers to use, especially in classrooms with dozens of pupils.

We found that most P3 teachers do not use CAM forms to monitor the progress of their learners. Only 17 and 20 percent of P3 teachers in T1 and T2 schools respectively had CAM forms available. Among this small group of teachers that report having CAM forms, around 40 percent of the T2 teachers use them every day, and only 7 percent of T1 teachers do so (

Figure 21).

**Figure 21. Frequency of use of CAM forms (for those with CAM forms)**



\*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

During our P3 classroom observations, we saw little evidence of continuous assessment. Only 2 of the treatment classrooms teachers – out of 23 – could produce a CAM form. Both included entries for individual learners and also included marks for different components of literacy. Neither of the CAM forms was used in the course of the lessons, and only one was dated – for Term 3, 2019. It seems unlikely therefore that these are used to record a formative assessment of reading regularly. Although teachers were observed listening to individual learners read, the nature of feedback was restricted. One of the crucial methods of reading practice and assessment (I do, we do, you do) potentially contributed to a repetitive, chorused classroom discourse, empty of evaluative potential.

### SUPPLEMENTAL READING MATERIALS

LARA's supplemental reading materials consist of story cards and reading books in English. The story cards are one page, double-sided and laminated for durability. LARA developed eight different story cards that are grade-level appropriate: four for P1 and P2, and four for P3 and P4. Field teams of trained interpersonal communicators met with caregivers to teach them how to use the story cards, even if the

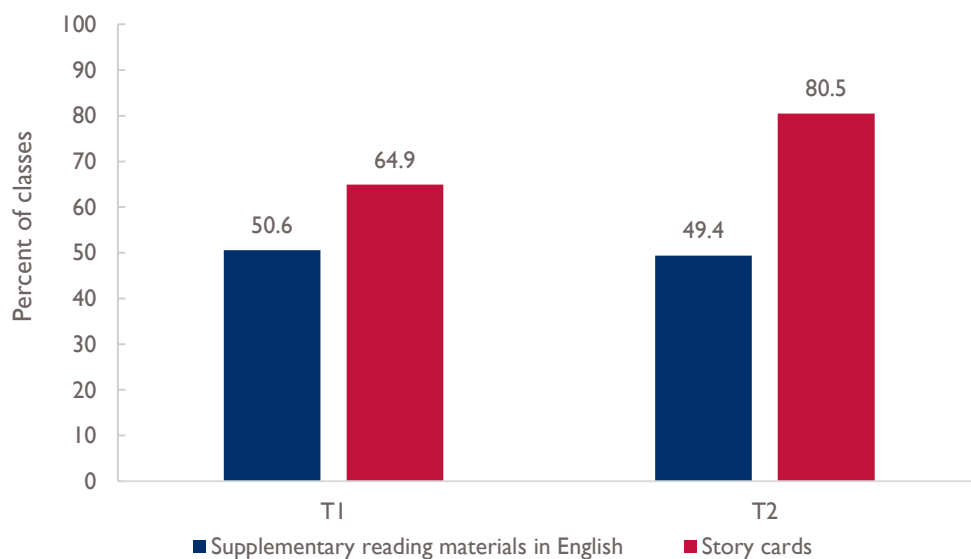
caregiver is not literate. LARA also distributed flashcards and caregiver-pupil cards to select schools. The supplemental reading books in English were intended for pupils to take home to read to/with their caregivers. These books were secured through LARA’s cost-share effort and their partnership with Cotton on Foundation and Stanbic Bank, as well as through a partnership with Books for Africa.

Recognizing that there is not a tradition of allowing pupils to take school materials home, LARA established a book lending practice and trained teachers on book management and lending practice. The one-day training program introduced the lending protocol and tried to reduce teachers’ anxiety about books being lost or damaged. However, based on information collected during school visits, it appears that there is still work that needs to be done to get teachers and head teacher comfortable lending books to pupils to take and use at home.

By the end of Year 4 (September 2019), LARA had distributed 694,158 story cards and 274,094 supplemental reading books to 791 schools. Only a maximum of eight different story cards was given to each participating school – four for P1 and P2, and four for P3 and P4. This is more than they had before, but still quite limited exposure to this opportunity to stimulate and challenge young learners. Further, the story cards were printed in black-and-white, making them a bit less inviting. Distribution of supplemental reading books was even more limited, with only six districts receiving supplemental reading books. Again, more than schools had before, but not enough to realize a widespread impact.

During teacher interviews, we asked about the availability of these supplementary reading materials. Figure 22 shows the findings. Around half of the P3 classes in treatment schools received LARA supplementary reading books in English. We also find that 65 and 81 percent of T1 and T2 schools, respectively, received LARA story cards.

**Figure 22. Availability of LARA supplementary reading materials in English and story cards in P3 classes, as reported by the teacher**



\*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

Although the story cards were intended to be used in the home rather than the classroom, we asked P3 teachers about their use during classes, given that the low volume of materials and norms make lending difficult and unlikely. About 32 and 42 percent of teachers in P3 classes that have LARA story cards in

T1 and T2 schools, respectively, use them “every day” or “a few times a week”. However, on average around 29 percent of T1+T2 teachers mentioned that they “rarely” or “never” use the LARA story cards.

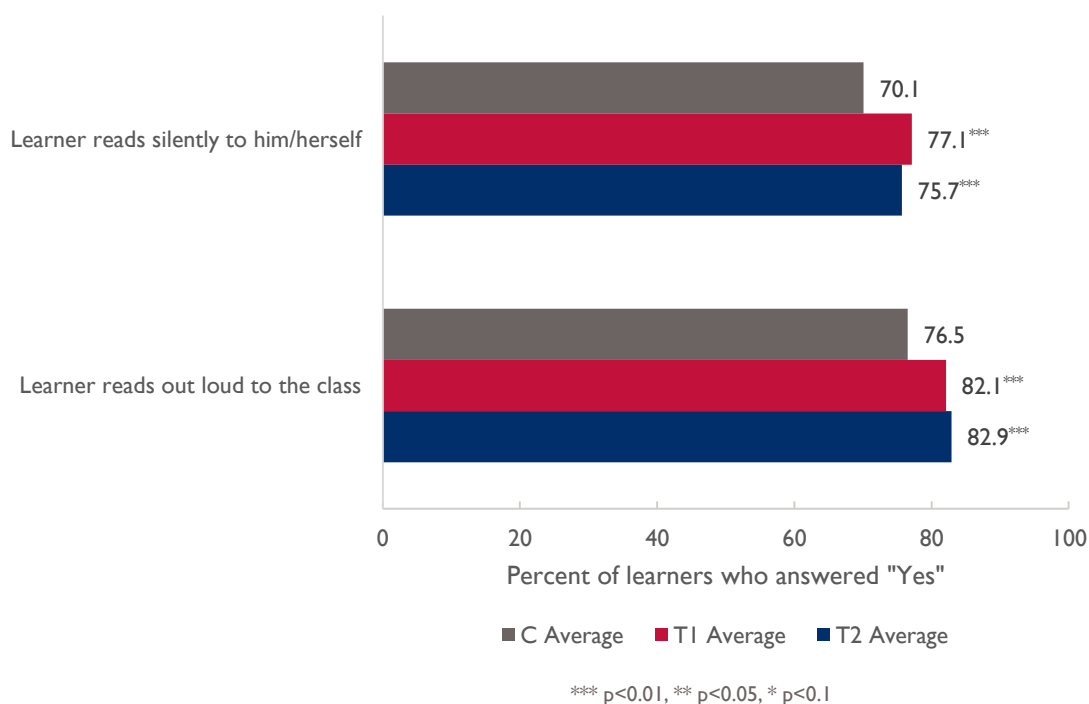
### LANGUAGE USE

Through the provision of resources, the LARA program –in line with the MOES’ policy- promotes local language instruction in Literacy I in the first four grades. The use of language of instruction during this period was thus of interest in the classroom observation studies. Local language was used in all the P3 lessons that incorporated the lesson plans. In the five lessons that did not, 3 were conducted mostly in English (with some use of local language), one was conducted entirely in English, and the other in the local language. In the control schools, none of the lessons were conducted in the local language, 4 were a mix of English and local language and 2 were in English only. As in the 2017 and 2018 studies, the dominance of English in the control lessons suggests the positive impact of the provision of materials and lesson plans in the local language as well as its emphasis in the training. There is slightly less use of English across the treatment group at the P3 level in 2019, however.

### READING PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM

Learners reported more reading activities performed in a regular school day in the treatment schools than in the control schools (Figure 23). The rate of P3 learners who silently read to themselves is significantly higher in the T1 (77 percent) and T2 (76 percent) groups than in the control group (70 percent). Similarly, the proportion of learners who read out loud to their classes is significantly higher in the T1 (82 percent) and T2 (83 percent) schools than in the control group (77 percent).

**Figure 23. Reading practices of P3 learners in the classroom**



There are several factors that KIs believe affect the uptake of the methodology in the classroom. Among the most mentioned we found: weak support supervision, the complexity of the teacher's guide, teachers' transfers, teacher attendance, pre-service training, the language of examinations, and quality of LARA training. No informant singled out just one factor; most mentioned several possible factors.

Based on the reports obtained during KIs with teachers, it seems that teachers understand and can replicate some of the individual instruction techniques. The most common examples were beating words and using the "I Do, We Do, You Do" approach, included in the teacher guides. The analysis of classroom observations in P1 classes in 2017 and 2018, and P3 classes in 2019 indicates that some of the LARA training was incorporated by teachers, with the use of lesson plans and LARA pupil reading books were common across the majority of classrooms. Most lessons in treatment schools were structured by the training and in the majority of treatment classrooms, learners were exposed to text and engaged in different types of reading. However, opportunities to read extended text were also constrained, and given that Literacy I is crucially concerned with learning to read, this should be cause for concern.

Classroom observations show a limited uptake of the methodologies advanced by the LARA program. In the case of each lesson where the training was incorporated, some components were omitted. What teachers included from the LARA scripted plans appeared to be those components amenable to repetition. Classroom discourse tended to follow patterns of highly repetitive, chorused repetitions of sounds, words, and sometimes paragraphs. More expository lessons or parts of lessons entailed a core antiphonal structure with ritualized closed questioning and chorused response. What was evident in the instructional content was that lessons entailed a very low level of cognitive demand. This was apparent in the nature of questioning and classroom discourse, as well as the fact that the more difficult elements and steps of the program were left out. Theme discussions, picture discussions, and open-ended questions were absent or restricted. Thus, the vagaries (and possibilities) of learner talk were foreclosed and opportunities for learners' oral language development were curtailed. The reading of the text was subject to excessive repetition such that it was evident in several settings that learners were learning to *remember* text rather than to *read* it.

In addition, very little collaborative learning was evident. There was very little discussion of text or ideas and no evidence of scaffolding in the teaching. Continuous assessment was also not evidenced: there was a lack of feedback from the teacher on learners' responses and no use of the LARA Cam form. There was no conceptual or linguistic building through the exchange, and no explicit indication when a learner's production was partial or incorrect. Across all the classrooms only one learner was seen to ask a question, and this question was deferred by the teacher.

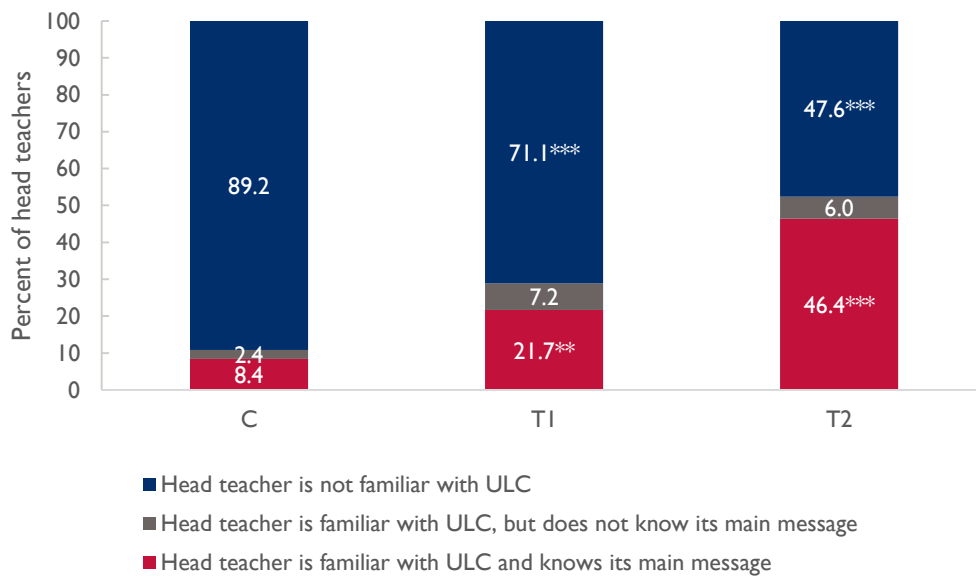
Despite this, it was striking in the data the contrast between the treatment and control lessons. In the treatment classrooms, the LARA program established the potential for systematic teaching and learning of reading to occur. Most notable were the *predictable pedagogical routines* that were focused around text, as well as an appropriate progression of content (sounds, words, extended text) written into the week-by-week program. The absence of text, structure, and clear purpose in the control classrooms was clear, especially in the unpredictable and unfocused whole-class discussions. The lack of specified progression for literacy learning was evident in the very low level of content introduced in these classrooms. The high level of implementation fidelity in treatment schools potentially offers a good base on which to build, to extend teachers beyond excessive repetition, and to encourage more learner talk, oral language development, and engagement with the meaning of the text.

## **UGANDA LITERACY CAMPAIGN**

LARA implemented the Uganda Learning Campaign to promote parental involvement in their children’s reading practice. The campaign, which targeted caregivers, ran for three months from February to April 2018. LARA trained field teams on interpersonal communication to engage with caregivers on home visits on four thematic areas of supporting their children’s reading: the value of education, the role of the caregiver, creating time for reading, and the caregiver-child relationship. LARA provided sub-grants to implement campaigns in 29 districts which included at least 20 drama shows in each C2 district, as well as home visits with caregivers. At the national level, the LARA team implemented two television commercials running daily for two weeks, one radio program weekly for one month, and four radio advertisements daily for one month.

Despite this, we found that almost 60 percent of head teachers across the treatment groups were not familiar with the ULC, and only around one third know its main message (it encourages caregivers and others to read with children at home). As expected, the proportion of head teachers in the control group who are familiar with the ULC and know its main message is significantly lower (8 percent) (Figure 24). Similarly, most P3 teachers in treated schools are not familiar with the ULC: only 17 and 43 percent of teachers in T1 and T2 schools, respectively, responded that they are familiar with ULC. On average, almost all – 93 percent – of those familiar with the ULC know its main message, although, in the case of the teachers who participated in the KIs, none knew about the ULC.

**Figure 24. Head teachers’ awareness of the ULC**



\*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.1

Even though the ULC targeted caregivers and it included home visits, caregivers participating in FGDs were not widely informed about LARA. Most had a faint idea of LARA activities, but there was one group where all but one person had no familiarity with LARA. Five focus group discussions agree that LARA carried a good message, and at least one member from all focus group discussions note that they had enacted some change in their behavior due to LARA. These changes included improved Luganda reading skills for learners, increased availability of reading material at home, and encouraging older learners in the household to support younger ones. Other benefits include caregiver motivation to undertake financial planning for their children. One caregiver from Luganda notes that LARA “...helped



*me to plan early from the meager resources at my disposal and pay school fees for the children in time...”*  
(Male Caregiver, FGD, L District)

According to teachers interviewed, caregivers believe it is the teachers’ responsibility to teach children to read and the caregivers’ responsibility to pay fees for teachers to do their job. Also, according to a sub-grantee interviewed, caregivers are too busy in the evening hours preparing food and with other domestic chores to actively engage in their children’s learning. Therefore, any effort to engage caregivers must start with helping them understand the benefits of reading to/with their children so the children can practice what they are learning in school.

### **AT-HOME READING**

We do not find the LARA intervention has an effect on the availability of books at home or at-home reading practices. On average, across all schools, 3 in 4 learners have books that they can read at home, apart from schoolbooks. Also, around 94 percent of all learners interviewed reported reading at home, either every day or sometimes. Moreover, on average, 58 percent of learners have someone at home reading to or with them. This finding is consistent with the figures reported by the LARA team.

According to KIs with teachers, learners are not always allowed to take the story cards home. Even though LARA trained teachers on a lending protocol, head teachers and teachers fear that the story cards would get “spoiled” or lost so they do not feel comfortable lending them. Also, the lack of functional libraries in most schools makes it difficult to use any existing lending practices.

Caregivers indicated that some children bring home textbooks and/or English books from the school to read. One caregiver noted that the textbooks provided by the school to take home are helpful when learners have assignments, or read by themselves. One focus group discussion respondent mentioned buying school books at a market, but they were subsequently stolen.

Two focus group discussions explicitly note that schools do not lend out books for learners to take home, saying that lending was restricted to older learners. Caregivers from both of these FGDs suggest that this was due to poor conditions at homes that would prevent the books from remaining intact. One FGD respondent went in-depth about these conditions:

*“Some of the homes have leaking roofs so when it rains, books from school may be spoilt, others have rats, others have small babies who will play with the book and tear it apart while others just don’t know how to keep them ... So some teachers are cautious”* (Female Caregiver, FGD, RR District)

The aforementioned lending policy is particularly problematic for families that live far from school, and aren’t able to reference materials discussed in class for their homework. One caregiver notes:

*“My children want to read; they have an interest at reading. However, they can only access the textbooks at school and when they get home, there is nothing for them yet they have an interest.”* (Female Caregiver, FGD, RR District)

At home, caregivers did not seem to possess a large variety of engaging and age-appropriate reading materials for their children. Bibles, hymn books, and old newspapers were frequently mentioned as being available to readers, with two groups saying they only possessed these materials and nothing supplemental. Other groups spoke of having books bought in-town or reading charts available to the learners in their households.

One of the most frequently repeated factors enabling reading (explicitly or otherwise) appeared to be the presence and involvement of caregivers who are invested in their child's learning progress. Characteristics and behaviors of involved caregivers include checking learner homework/books at home, providing reading material and proper meals at home, having good relationships and communication with children, and engaging in income-generating activities or extra work to raise money for their children's education. Even caregivers who admitted to lacking in education themselves noted that they still attempted to encourage their children to learn to read.

Challenging and prohibitive factors related to reading widely centered on household poverty and the frustrations that it brings. Lack of ability to pay school fees and general financial constraints were repeatedly mentioned, as well as the lack of food available for learners. Poor lighting in the evenings was also brought up frequently, as alternatives to candles such as paraffin, electricity, and solar power are preferred but are often too expensive to procure. Domestic responsibilities assigned to learners often get in the way of reading and homework time as well. Other issues that get in the way of reading progress include fear of corporal punishment from teachers at school, an unstable home environment, and a lack of age-appropriate reading materials at home.

*“It is a greater booster for them to learn that we are walking the road with them and that we take their studying very seriously. Even if some of us may not read, the mere fact that you can ask a child to read for you or to look at his or her book in itself sends a powerful statement that you value and take what the child is doing at school with a lot of seriousness.”* (Female Caregiver, FGD, RR District)

There also seems to be relatively low participation in reading events by learners. Only one focus group discussion respondent mentions their child's involvement in such events. However, it does appear that children have other opportunities to do public speaking in their communities in both Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga. Members of four FGDs note that their children read aloud at church services, and the three Runyankore/Rukiga FGDs note that their children participate in debates at school.

It should be considered, however, that caregivers who took the initiative to attend focus group discussions could be more involved and interested in their children's academic progress and overall development than the typical caregiver. Caregivers in all focus group discussions explicitly state that promoting reading at home helps them in their efforts build a positive relationship with their child.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 SRGBV

Overall we see a very modest effect of R2 activities implemented by LARA. There is no statistically significant difference in learners' and caregivers' gender attitudes between T1 and T2 schools. In contrast, teachers in T2 schools show more gender-equitable attitudes than teachers in T1 schools, and the difference is statistically significant. The qualitative data also tends to show similar gender-inequitable attitudes to those found at baseline.

We asked learners whether they felt safe on the way to and at school, asking if they agree with specific statements about their school climate. There is no statistically significant difference in school climate indicators between T1 and T2 schools. The differences between T1 and T2 go in the correct direction, that is, they are favorable for T2 schools. The exception is the statement "Learners feel safe on the way to and from school" where a slightly higher percent of learners say they feel safe in T1 schools compared to T2 schools. However, the differences are very small and not statistically significantly different. The qualitative data indicate that both girls and boys feel unsafe around the perimeters of school compounds that are unfenced, and afraid in the latrines area, albeit for different reasons. While boys are afraid of falling in or getting infections, girls remained afraid of peeping toms and sexual assault. Both genders reported feeling unsafe during the journey to and from school.

We asked caregivers and teachers about violent and non-violent disciplinary methods they use with children. There is no statistically significant difference in the approach to discipline used by caregivers between T1 and T2 groups. Among teachers in T2 schools, there is a statistically significant decrease in the use of insults towards learners, refusing to speak to learners, or locking learners up as a form of discipline. The percentage of T1 teachers and head teachers who believe that hitting a learner with a cane or stick as an effective method of discipline at school is higher than in T2 schools, with the difference being statistically significant for teachers. These results, compared to those asking the same question using the term "corporal punishment" suggest that there is a disconnect in understanding what corporal punishment really is and suggests that teachers do not consider caning as corporal punishment. However, in KIIIs with teachers in LARA T2 schools the head teachers spoke passionately about ending the harsh physical punishment of learners, and attributed their newfound skills in alternative discipline methods to LARA.

We see no statistically significant difference in the total prevalence of violence between T2 and T1 schools. When looking at the prevalence of different types of violence, we do see some statistically significant differences between T1 and T2 learners, though when analyzing so many outcomes (types of violence reported) we expect to have a certain percentage of false effects. For example, 59 percent of learners in T1 schools report being hit in school with objects such as a cane, stick, belt, or book by a teacher. In T2 schools, it is 52 percent and the difference is statistically significant. The frequency of this type of behavior is identical in T1 and T2 schools. Qualitative findings also indicate persisting physical and emotional violence for children. Children reported experiencing emotional violence in the form of bullying, nicknames associated with low levels of intelligence from teachers, and bullying about their physical features. Girls continue to experience bullying from teachers and other learners during their menstrual cycle.

In both T1 and T2 schools, almost all learners report knowing to whom they can report violence. However, the proportion of learners that report having an adult that they trust to whom to report

violence is lower: 49 and 58 percent in T1 and T2 schools respectively. The difference between T1 and T2 schools is statistically significant suggesting that LARA activities had an effect; however, the proportion of learners that the activity has affected positively is still below 60 percent.

Evidence of implementation of Journeys activities in T2 schools, however, is very far from universal. For example, only 25 percent of learners participated in any activity related to violence prevention and only 52 percent had seen any materials related to Journeys. Indicators on implementation for teachers and head teacher show higher rates of familiarity with Journeys materials and experience with Uganda Kids Unite groups.

## **5.2 EGR**

At the end of 2019, LARA shows positive effects on the reading performance of cohort 2 P3 learners in Luganda and Runyankore/Rukiga dominant language regions. The effects of the program are similar in each region, giving us great confidence in the findings and, as expected, LARA had stronger effects in local languages than in English. We found no difference in reading performance of P3 learners between T1 and T2 schools which indicates that SRGBV-related program components brought no additional benefit to learners' reading ability.

LARA has benefited learners with both low and high reading skills. An improvement in reading performance was found across groups of learners with different reading abilities. EGRP reduced the number of zero scores among P3 learners and also increased the percentage of learners that reach at least 20 cwpm in the oral reading fluency subtask. This is an important achievement; however, reading performance remains, on average, quite low for the treated learners at the end of P3. Learners decoding skills are low; on average, learners in T1 and T2 schools, can identify less than 14 correct letter sounds in a minute. Reading ability is low as well. Over a quarter of P3 learners benefitted by LARA are non-readers – they cannot read a single word from a short grade 2 level paragraph – and on average oral reading fluency is around 17 words per minute, which is far from the levels needed to be able to comprehend the text read.

Nevertheless, the improvement due to LARA EGR activities is significant. The progress achieved by the program is a good base on which to build. With that aim, we explored in detail the different components of LARA ERG activities to identify what is working well and what needs to be improved.

The strengths of the LARA program are evident when comparing instructional reading practices between treatment and control schools. Many, although not all, treatment classrooms implemented the program on the day of classroom observation. Having LARA reading books in the lessons supported a greater engagement by learners with text and more opportunities for reading extended text. Learners in control classrooms and treatment classrooms not implementing the program read no extended text, but rather engaged in choral recitation of single words or short text written on the blackboard. LARA also offered opportunities to engage with literacy-specific skills and content around the phonetic, semantic, and syntactic aspects of language. Lessons tend to focus on the letter, syllable, word, sentence, and extended text levels, although around half completed 50 percent or less of the lesson plan for the day. The more challenging aspects of the program were left out. P3 teachers are more likely to follow aspects of the program that resembled closely the structure of P1 and P2 lessons than those that require additional and more challenging work on vocabulary and language structure. Lessons lack opportunities for learners to read an extended text, particularly to read silently and independently.

The fact that these aspects were often not exploited does not diminish the importance of explicit instruction of learners in how to read in the program. In control and treatment classrooms not implementing the program, instruction focused on content topics (health, culture, gender) where the

informational content relevant to these topics was emphasized, rather than literacy-specific skills and content.

Neither CAM forms nor alternative methods are used by P3 teachers to conduct a continuous assessment of learners. Sometimes, teachers listen to individual learners read, but their feedback is quite restricted. One of the crucial methods of reading practice and assessment (I do, we do, you do) potentially contributed to a very repetitive, chorused discourse, empty of evaluative potential.

The above observations suggest that further work is needed during teaching training and support supervision visits to instill rich, engaging, and motivating language in the classroom as the fundamental basis for becoming literate. Support supervision visits are less frequent than they should be. In particular, support supervision by CCTs and district education officers is very low. This seems to be a consequence of lack of time, lack of means to reach the schools, and competing responsibilities. Head teachers are not engaged in support supervision either. This creates an important challenge that was already present in USAID/SHRP – the activity that preceded LARA. If support supervision is not properly and credibly embed in the education system, it will not be sustainable and most likely will disappear once LARA ends.

LARA distributed plenty of reading books among treatment schools that were very well-received. However, in many classes, reading books are not in the hand of learners as they should. This seems to be the result of school policies that keep all or some of the learner's books in storage perhaps to avoid them being damaged, undermining the full potential of the program. The lack of opportunities that learners have to handle books and experience individual reading is reinforced by the lack of reading materials at home. Supplementary reading materials and reading cards are scarce and the lending system for the few materials available does not work well. It is hard to overestimate the importance of having access to quality, print text in the development of children's literacy and learning, and in the creation of positive behaviors and habits that support reading development.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of recommendations stem from our findings:

### SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Improve the school climate. Make the school climate safer for learners is within the domain of head teachers and teachers' responsibilities. More can be done here in two key areas.

- School infrastructure: Many learners continue to feel unsafe in school due to a lack of boundary wall and latrines that lack locks on the doors. Future programs on SRGBV that include funding for a boundary wall may result in quick payoffs. At a minimum, it is easy to insist that school latrines have functioning locks to ensure program support.
- Change head teacher and teacher behavior: Train **all** teachers in the school on positive, non-physical disciplinary methods, SRGBV prevention and response, not victim-blaming survivors of violence, and effective, non-re-victimizing communication through guidance and counseling. Going beyond an SBCC approach, start with teacher discussion groups to reflect on gender norms, as well as school and community expectations for teachers' behaviors that underpin SRGBV. Groups can work toward developing a shared understanding of the negative effects of SRGBV on child development and academic achievement and work toward new, positive norms that define a safe, supportive, nurturing, and reliable teacher. Embedded within a norm change approach could include a nested SBCC campaign that sends a clear message that it is acceptable to talk with children respectfully, use non-violent, positive disciplinary methods, and not use harsh physical or psychological punishment. On-going and in-service training for teachers is required beyond the limited implementation of one program; the cascading model of training does not seem to be working.

Include SRGBV prevention activities as part of the school hours, rather than having SRGBV as an extracurricular activity. Undertake and test a pilot that changes the approach towards SRGBV, for example all grades PI-P7 could have one hour of SRGBV prevention per week.

SRGBV encompasses a difficult and large range of issues to address as one of multiple program components. Future programs that take on this topic should have this as an explicit focus, with activities that address the problem from several angles directly, including social and gender norm change strategies at a peer reference group level, and school-wide and community levels specifically addressing norms that underpin and perpetuate SRGBV in order to evaluate their contributions toward change in the incidence of pupil SRGBV exposure. Journeys focuses largely on socio and emotional learning with SRGBV interspersed throughout; a more targeted and streamlined message with more time to get through the material is critical.

Revise the program that relies on district support supervision. District officials do not have the time and resources to visit the schools for support supervision for SRGBV activities. Given that the current system is not working and there are challenges to changing this system, work with the head teachers to empower them and have them provide support supervision within their schools.

Work at the national level with MoES: Ministry officials understand the importance and seem open to the idea of including SRGBV prevention and response in their primary teacher college curriculum that focuses on teacher development and management. This is important and will have long term impact on reducing SRGBV. Additionally, explore working with MoES to change the current Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response process whereby only head teachers report cases of SRGBV cases to the LC or district. If all school teachers are allowed to report an incidence it can prevent head teachers from becoming gatekeepers and interfering with child violence survivors seeking justice.

## **EARLY-GRADE READING**

Teacher training and support: The high level of implementation fidelity in treatment schools potentially offers a good base on which to build, to extend teachers beyond excessive repetition and to encourage more learner talk, oral language development and engagement with meaning of text. We recommend to include more discussion and more demonstration of these activities during training and during support visits. In particular, conducting demonstrations in the actual classroom could be very valuable for teachers. Some MoES officials, based on their belief that the EGR program is a success, are pushing it to be fully integrated into pre-service training offered at Primary Teacher Colleges (PTCs) and Universities. This type of action is promising and should be carefully considered in future programs.

Improve teacher support supervision: A larger fraction of teachers in treatment schools received more frequent support supervision than those in control schools; however, there are still many teachers that do not receive supervision at all or do not receive it frequently enough to make it useful. In particular, support supervision by head teachers, CCTs and district education officers is very low. Evidence suggests that including follow-up classroom visits and teachers support increases learning gains (see for example, 2018 World Development Report). We recommend exploring this challenge and focus on how to effectively scale support supervision within the education system to ensure sustainability of the program, given that the current approach is not working.

Continuous Assessment. LARA or future programs need to revise its approach to train teachers in conducting continuous assessment of learners. CAM forms are not being used, teachers are not creating alternatives and even oral feedback to learners seems insufficient.

Putting reading books in learners' hands. Additional work and training needs to be done with head teachers and teachers to persuade them that reading books and supplemental materials are only useful if they are in the hands of the children. This should be reinforced during support supervision visits. Reading materials to take home are insufficient and schools are reluctant to lend them to the children. In the future, it would be worth considering alternatives to create inexpensive products, for example newsprint materials, which even if not designed to last through the years, can be given to children to read at home or in school.

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