

Evaluating the quality, outcomes and sustainability of Nal'ibali Reading Clubs

About Nal'ibali Reading Clubs

Reading Clubs are safe, informal spaces run by caring adults where children can engage freely with books and stories.

About the evaluation

In December 2018, Nal'ibali had 4 839 active* Reading Clubs. JET Education Services was contracted to evaluate the quality, outcomes and sustainability of Reading Clubs.

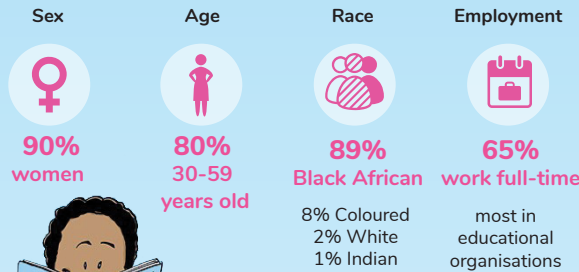
Research methods:

Telephonic survey – 349 active and 50 inactive Reading Club Leaders
Site visits – 25 clubs in 9 provinces, including Reading Club session observation, interviews and focus groups.

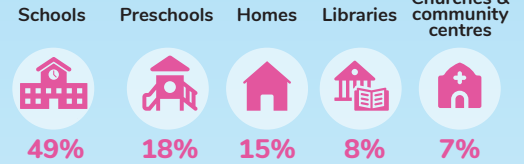
*The study sampled 2 706 clubs confirmed active via re-registration by June 2019.

Club and leader profile

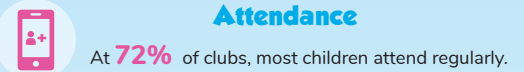
Leaders



Venues



Attendance



Reading Club quality

JET used a quality framework to classify clubs as weak, struggling, developing, good or excellent, based on these dimensions:

Adult / child ratio



Ideal: ≤1:15

63% of clubs meet this

Frequency and duration of meetings



Ideal: at least once a week
97% of clubs do this

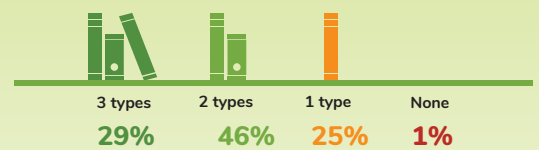
Ideal: At least 45 minutes per session
66% of clubs do this

Access to resources

Ideal: at least 2 types of core reading materials (own books, Nal'ibali newspaper inserts, library books)

Materials are generally available in the language/s used at clubs, except in Tshivenda.

How many types of core resources do clubs have?



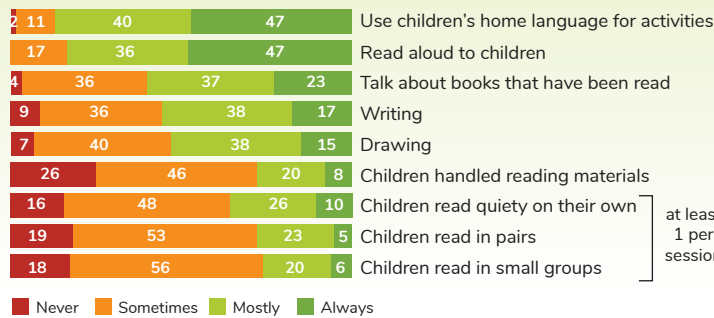
However, quantities of core resources are limited. 44% have less than 20 of each resource.



Practice

Ideal: Activities mapped in the graph (%) should take place mostly or always.

Children do not engage with text independently as often as intended. This may be hindered by Reading Club Leaders' understanding of its importance, and in some cases by insufficient reading materials.



Quality of Reading Clubs (%)



There were no weak Reading Clubs: 65% were good and excellent.

Perceived outcomes

Some of the changes most frequently reported are that children are spending more time reading for enjoyment and their reading skills have improved.



Sustainability

More than two thirds of Reading Clubs stop running within a year of registration.

Threats to sustainability are:

- Departure of Nal'ibali staff when a focused project ends.
- Challenges of attracting volunteers in communities with high unemployment.
- Difficulty balancing curriculum demands and running a school-based Reading Club.

Conclusion and recommendations

Cost-effective strategies identified include:

STRATEGY	COST PER CLUB/YEAR*
Face-to-face training which better emphasises ideal practice	R1 654
1-year supplement subscription (15 editions) to increase reading resources	R1 350
Stipends for Nal'ibali staff to monitor and support clubs	R894

*Assuming an average of 30 children per Reading Club

