



United Nations Children's Fund

RFP No: LRPS-2021-9171545

**Evaluation of the Reading and Leadership
Strengthening in South African Schools for
Learning during COVID-19 and Beyond
(REALS SA) Programme (2021-2022)**

Revised Full Inception Report

30 June 2022

Contact Details

Contact	Cara Hartley
Postal address	PO Box 46830, Glosderry, 7702
Physical address	Ubunye House, 1 st floor, 70 Rosmead Avenue, Kenilworth, Cape Town, 7708
Telephone	(021) 671 1402
Facsimile	(021) 671 1409
Cell phone	072 361 6821
E-mail	cara@pdg.co.za

Project details

Title of the action:	Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning During Covid-19 and Beyond (REALS SA)
Location(s) of the action	South Africa: Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo Provinces
Total duration of the action (months):	24 months
Total Budget for the Action	USD 2 534 382 (Includes UNICEF's contribution of USD 149 982)
Amount (in EUR) of requested EU contribution	EUR 2 Million (Estimated USD 2 384 400)
Objective of the Action	<p>Outcome: The Department of Basic Education, Provincial Departments and Schools are supported to respond to and manage the impact of Covid-19 on education for improved learning outcomes in Quintiles 1, 2 and 3 schools in selected provinces, including a focus on parental involvement and support.</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Department of Basic Education (DBE) efforts on continuity of learning, through traditional and innovative approaches. • Strengthen capacity of key stakeholders in the education sector and enhance access to learning materials. The focus in this area will be enhancing parental engagement, accountability, and leadership for sustainability through capacity building of district officials and School Management Teams on effective leadership during emergency and after (Kwa Zulu Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo).
Target group(s)	<p>Direct</p> <p>Output 1 and 2: 650 Schools</p> <p>Output 1 and 2: 292,500 learners</p> <p>Output 1: 65,000 parents/caregivers</p> <p>Output 1: 4,600 Teachers</p> <p>Output 2: 975 Principals & Deputies (SMT Members)</p> <p>Output 2: 3,250 School Governing Bodies Members (parents/caregivers)</p> <p>Output 2: Circuit Managers & Subject Advisors: 104 officials</p>
Final beneficiaries (direct)	<p>292,500 Learners of which at least 50% are girls</p> <p>4,225 School Governing Body (SGBs) and SMT (3,250 SGB and 975 SMT) majority of which are women</p> <p>65,000 parents</p>
Main areas of intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of the reading recovery programme for better learning outcomes • Support curriculum trimming as part of the overall curriculum recovery programme • Strengthen capacity of key stakeholders in the education sector and enhance access to learning materials

Abbreviations

AfL	Assessment for Learning
CoP	Community of Practice
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
E4E	Education for Employability
EC	Eastern Cape
ESC	Evaluation Steering Committee
EU	European Union
HOD	Head of Department
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LP	Limpopo Province
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust
PED	Provincial Education Department
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PMT	Programme Management Team
PSA	Performance Solutions Africa
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
REALS SA	Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South Africa
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	Senior Management Team
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TT	Technical Team
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	United Nations

Contents

Project details	2
1 Introduction	6
1.1 Background to the Inception Report	6
1.2 Key Inception Phase events	6
1.3 Contents of the Report	8
1.4 Objective of the evaluation	8
1.5 Scope of the evaluation	9
2 Context and Description of the Programme	9
2.1 Context and problem statement	9
2.2 Policy and Strategic Relevance	12
2.3 Programme description	14
2.4 Theory of Change.....	21
3 Evaluation Framework and Methodology	40
3.1 Evaluation criteria and questions	41
3.2 Evaluation matrix.....	43
3.3 Methodology	44
3.4 Sources and Sampling.....	47
3.5 Analytical approaches.....	47
3.6 Evaluability Assessment, Risks and Limitations	49
3.7 Ethics and evaluation principles	54
4 Workplan	59
4.1 Phases.....	59
4.2 Team composition and responsibilities	64
4.3 Quality assurance	65
4.4 Management and logistic support.....	66
4.5 Calendar of work	69
5 Annexes.....	71
5.1 Evaluation TOR	71
5.2 Stakeholder Map	71
5.3 Tentative outline of the main report	71
5.4 Data collection tools and interview protocols	72
5.5 Ethical Declaration Form	72
5.6 Evaluation Logical Framework	72
5.7 Programme Theory.....	72
5.8 Detailed responsibilities of evaluation team members	72
5.9 Detailed Workplan	72
5.10 Evaluation matrix.....	73
5.11 Equity Analysis Framework.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5.12 References	90

5.13 Document map 92

List of Tables

Table 1: Key Inception Phase events 6

Table 2: REALS SA sub-programme summaries 17

Table 3: REALS SA Budget Summary by Workstreams..... 20

Table 4: Data collection methods 45

Table 5: Summary of data collection methods 45

Table 6: Required monitoring data 46

Table 7: Evaluability Assessment of REALS SA 50

Table 8: Team roles and responsibilities..... 64

Table 9: Calendar of work..... 69

List of Figures

Figure 1: Programme and Sub-Programme Structure 15

Figure 2: REALS SA Stakeholder Map..... 19

Figure 3: Implementation arrangements..... 20

Figure 4: REALS SA Overview ToC 23

Figure 5. Characteristics of the REALS SA programme 25

Figure 6: ToC for Leadership and Management 28

Figure 7: ToC for Recovery Curriculum 32

Figure 8: ToC for Reading Recovery 34

Figure 9: ToC for Assessment for Learning (AfL)..... 36

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Inception Report

This is the full Inception Report for an evaluation of the Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning during COVID-19 and Beyond (REALS SA) programme. This programme was developed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in collaboration with UNICEF, the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) and the European Union (EU) as a response to the Risk and crises incited by the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically in Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools in South Africa.

The Inception Phase commenced upon contracting of the evaluation team in mid-January 2022. It was noted that UNICEF requires an extensive Inception Report, including data collection instruments, to submit for quality assessment. However, in discussion with the Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC), the team agreed that it would be useful to deliver the Inception Report in two versions:

- Version A (late February 2022) – detailed workplan, evaluability assessment and draft evaluation matrix; and
- Version B (first submission in mid-May 2022; this submission at the end of June 2022) – full Inception Report including finalized versions of the above, plus: theory of change, programme description, evaluation design, final fieldwork plan and instruments, and other components as required for the Inception Report quality assessment.

1.2 Key Inception Phase events

The table below sets out the key events that took place in the Inception Phase.

Table 1: Key Inception Phase events

Milestone / event	Date(s)
Contract signed by all parties	11 January 2022
First inception meeting	21 January 2022
ESC expresses in-principle agreement with revised delivery schedule, including submitting the Inception Report in two parts	01 February 2022
Documents and data shared	Since early February (ongoing)
Inception Phase consultations with key stakeholders	February 2022
Submission of Inception Report Version A	28 February 2022
Theory of Change Workshop with programme stakeholders	08 March 2022
Validation of sub-programme specific theories of change	14 – 18 March 2022
Presentation of Inception Report Version A to ESC	24 March 2022

Presentation of Inception Report Version A + ToC validation from DBE officials	20 April 2022
Submission of Inception Report Version B	23 May 2022
Ethical Review Board feedback received	01 June 2022
Presentation of Inception Report Version B to ESC	05 June 2022
ESC and Implementing Partner comments received	21 June 2022
Presentation to REALS SA Programme Management Team	27 June 2022
Final submission	30 June 2022

1.3 Changes in this submission

As the table above demonstrates, various inputs have shaped the updated Inception Report B, including inputs from the ESC verbally and in writing, the Ethical Review Board comments mentioned above, written inputs and some discussions with the Implementing Partners, and a presentation to the Programme Management Team on 27 June 2022.

No substantial changes were made to the methodology, but various elements have been adjusted, most notably:

- Changes to the evaluation questions, evaluation matrix and data collection instruments to provide greater focus on gender and equity considerations; and
- A shift in the date of planned data collection from August to September.

In addition, in response to the Ethical Review Board’s feedback, extensive changes were made to refine the data collection protocols, ethical and data management provisions. These changes did not substantively change the planned evaluation, but provides greater clarity on certain aspects and raises the ethical rigour of the process in several respects. (It should be noted that the evaluation does not intend to collect primary data directly from learners (children), but it does intend conduct focus groups with the parents and caregivers of children attending the targeted schools, which could potentially be considered socioeconomically vulnerable in the local context. It was agreed to apply for Ethical Review on this basis.)

The planned evaluation, as laid out in this report, faces two significant risks, both of which will require the ESC’s attention in the coming few weeks:

- Although the evaluation can fulfil its Terms of Reference if it goes ahead as planned with primary data collection in September, project delays mean that not all aspects of implementation will be evaluable by then; and
- The evaluation has exceeded its resource envelope for the inception phase, posing a risk to future phases.

Section 3.6.2 provides more detail on these. An analysis with trade-offs and options for consideration, will be submitted to the Steering Committee within the coming two weeks.

1.4 Contents of the Report

Beginning with an in-depth description of the REALS SA programme, section 2 looks at the context in which the programme was conceptualised, inquiring into the problem statement(s) that triggered the implementation of the programme. It then gives a description of the programme, the programme structure, how sub-programmes relate to the main programme, the programme budget, as well as the programme theories of change¹.

Section 3 speaks to the evaluation framework and methodology, beginning by highlighting that this evaluation is a combination of a design and implementation evaluation. It then discusses the evaluation criteria and questions, the evaluation matrix², the evaluation methodology, programme documentation and data that has informed the evaluation to date as well as the primary data to be collected during the evaluation. Section 3 also focuses on the analytical approaches to be employed by the evaluation. This encompasses the qualitative and quantitative data analysis, data triangulation, and concludes with the evaluability assessment, ethics and evaluation principles.

Section 4 describes the workplan for the evaluation. This covers the different phases of the evaluation, the team composition and responsibilities, quality assurance measures, an overview of management and logistic support, and concludes with an updated calendar of work.

Finally, section 5 contains the annexes.

1.5 Objective of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to understand whether the REALS SA project was designed and implemented in a way that contributes meaningfully to achieving the intended outcomes, and to inform future programming to make the impact of these outcomes more likely.

With implementation of the programme having commenced during 2021, the evaluation of the REALS SA programme will overall assess whether the programme was designed and is being implemented in a manner that enables the achievement of the intended outcomes, and later, impact. The evaluation will cover the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, not looking at impact as this would not be feasible given the timing of the evaluation and the design of the programme.

The evaluation is being conducted at this stage to help programme stakeholders and role players to better understand and refine the programme TOC and logic, and to assess

¹ There is an overview ToC capturing the overall logic of the programme, as well as sub-programme specific ToC's focusing on the four different sub-programmes

² Full version attached as an annexure.

programme delivery, procedures and processes to understand what is happening in practice, how it is happening, and why it is happening.

The final evaluation products will be used by the NECT, DBE, UNICEF and broader members of the education sector for the purpose of identifying lessons for similar future projects, identifying effective components of related programmes, learning how to better design and implement programmes, advocating for policy changes and informing future programme funding decisions.

1.6 Scope of the evaluation

As per the inception meeting, the evaluation will run over a period of 12 months (February 2022-January 2023), with direct engagement with beneficiaries³ in the roll-out provinces of Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. Guided by the criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, the evaluation will be looking at design and implementation elements of the REALS SA programme. Implementation will be evaluated focusing on the period since the approval of the Programme Document (April 2021) to the date of fieldwork (September 2022). The evaluation will look at each of the four REALS SA sub-programmes and their respective outcomes, and whether these outcomes all adequately contribute in the manner in which they were envisioned to, to the overarching REALS SA aim and objectives.

2 Context and Description of the Programme

This section provides a description of the REALS SA programme. It will begin by providing contextual information, proceed to link policy and strategic relevance of the programme, and then finally discuss the programme design inclusive of the Theory of Change.

2.1 Context and problem statement

The ability to read is one of the many building blocks for learning, and ensures children get the most out of their schooling. Literacy at the primary school level is the most cost-effective investment in the fight against poverty as it directly tackles unemployment by upskilling people to a level where they can secure a job or start a business and make a meaningful contribution to society (Help2Read, 2022). Future learning depends on the ability to read for meaning and pleasure, and the fundamental understanding of the relation between print and spoken language that comes with this ability (Spaull & Draper, 2015). In order to be able to read to learn, children must be able to “decode text relatively fluently and accurately; this is a prerequisite for learning higher order literacy skills such as the comprehension of text and assimilation [absorption] of knowledge communicated in text” (Meiklejohn et al., 2021).

³ Schools, teams/groups, and individuals. See data collection plan in a later section.

As briefly mentioned, literacy at primary school level is a cost-effective investment to directly tackle unemployment and therefore poverty levels within a country. This is related to the evidence that while there are various intellectual benefits for children who learn to read, those who learn to read well within the first three years of primary school “also have higher levels of socio-emotional wellbeing stemming from improved self-expression and communication as well as self-confidence” (Spaull & Draper, 2015). Unfortunately, the opportunity of learning to read for meaning as well as with fluency, accuracy and comprehension is scarce for the majority of South African children. Spaull & Draper (2015) find that “whether children are tested in their home language or in English, the conclusions are the same: the vast majority of South African children cannot read for meaning by the end of Grade 4 – even in their home language – and almost a third are still functionally illiterate in English by the end of Grade 6”.

In the South African context, the difficulties involved in making this transition from ‘learning to read’ to ‘reading to learn’ are compounded by the change in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) that most South African learners experience when they progress into the intermediate phase, or Grade 4. Given this reality, ideally one of the most common types of literacy interventions employed in South Africa, similar to the global trend, should be early grade reading interventions (Meiklejohn et al., 2021). Graham & Kelly (2019) define these as “interventions that employ a combination of five components: at a minimum, they must train teachers to teach reading using simplified instructional techniques and evidence-based curricula. In addition, they typically include in-class coaching and the provision of instructional guidelines, instructional materials, or tools for student assessment” (Meiklejohn et al., 2021).

While early grade reading interventions would be the best practice to employ given the national literacy challenge, the majority of interventions in the South African education sector are highly concentrated on the intermediate phase rather than the foundation phase (Meiklejohn et al., 2021). Apparently motivated in part by the results of the 2006 and 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)⁴, intermediate phase interventions are “focused on catching-up the skills that were not learnt by Grade 4 and mediating the language transition from home language instruction to English as the LoLT” (Meiklejohn et al., 2021). This reality has often been referred to as a ‘band-aid’ approach, and ought to ideally be the stimulus for the government to focus resources on building strong educational foundations.

While the country spends 6.2% of its GDP on education⁵ - the largest allocation compared with other sectors - the learning outcomes have not been commensurate with this level of spending. High rates of grade repetition are observed in Grades 1, 8 and 11, signalling potential inadequacies in preparing children for curriculum-related challenges, most especially with respect to reading acquisition. Furthermore, a historic failure to problematise

⁴ Results from both these studies strongly reiterated the inability of learners in Grade 4 and 5 to read for meaning.

⁵ The World Bank (2018) (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS?locations=ZA>).

the material conditions of marginalised children’s lives is a shortcoming of literacy policy, hence the continuation of largely unequal schooling (Meiklejohn et al., 2021). The majority of primary schools in South Africa are severely under resourced. Two or three books are shared between an entire classroom of learners, while writing utensils and literacy resources are scarce (Help2Read, 2022). Few children from poor township communities have books at home, and libraries are often too far away for these learners to access on a regular basis, if at all. Other serious challenges in the sector are a lack of accountability and technical capacity in the system, which continue to threaten the already poor quality of education outcomes.

In a strategic attempt to address the varying challenges within under-resourced communities, the schooling quintile system was introduced. Predicated on the unemployment rate and literacy rate of the community in which the school is located, the development of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) aimed to improve equity in the funding of education by ranking each school into one of five quintiles. A Quintile 1 ranking indicates a poor/impooverished school, and a Quintile 5 ranking indicates a wealthy/affluent school (Department of Education, 2006). The reasoning behind this notion is that schools serving poor communities (Quintiles 1, 2 and 3) should receive more state funding than schools serving wealthier communities (van Dyk & White, 2019).

Learners from Quintile 4 and 5 schools often perform better than learners from Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools (Ferguson, Bovaird & Mueller, 2007). Furthermore, rural children and poor children in South Africa perform worse than children from other African countries living under similar circumstances, despite better access to resources, better-qualified teachers and lower learner/educator ratios in South Africa. Similarly, based on data from the PIRLS on Grade 5 reading assessment and dividing schools based on their medium of instruction (English or Afrikaans vs. African language), learners from schools using African Languages as a medium of instruction perform lower than those from English/Afrikaans medium schools (Taylor & Yu, 2009).

Despite SA achieving near universal access to education, with gender parity, at primary and secondary levels, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has threatened to make the already glaring inequalities in South Africa even worse. The COVID-19 pandemic represented the biggest shock to the global public health system in over a century with resounding impact on economies and societies. The pandemic created uncertainties that led countries to take bold actions to safeguard public health, such as “complete lockdowns of economies and social activities” (COGTA & UNDP South Africa, 2020). Poor households and communities have carried the greater burden of the pandemic’s impact, particularly within the schooling environment.

As part of the nationwide lockdown on the economy and social activities, schools in South Africa were closed, with some later shifting to online learning in order to compensate for the time that had been lost in the school year. While this may not have been a difficult shift for

Quintile 4 and 5 schools, Quintile 1-3 schools were disproportionately affected by the school closures as they generally have poor infrastructure and IT connectivity (UNICEF, 2021a). With approximately 74% of children in South Africa attending Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools, school closures resulted in a devastating loss in teaching and learning time. All schools were closed from the third week of March through to 31 August 2020, with subsequent limited, phased return of learners to classes, meaning over 40% of school days were lost for most children in 2020 because of the pandemic. The missed school days have threatened the many gains towards remedying the already sub-optimal outcomes for children in SA.

The Covid-19 crisis and school closure has brought havoc on the already underperforming and unequal South African education system. The loss of learning time⁶, coupled with the compounding factors of the sector (highlighted above) and the constraints of schools having to deal with an unprecedented situation, underscores the crucial need for support interventions for continuation of learning. More than 13 million children have been affected by the closure of schools with a further 9 million children who normally benefit from the government school-feeding programme not having access to a nutritious meal during the periods of complete school closure, and on some days during the partial return to school. In addition, school health programmes have been disrupted and some children are more vulnerable to abuse and violence out of the learning environment (UNICEF, 2021a). While distance-learning mechanisms are continuously being implemented, they are disadvantaging those without internet access or adult supervision.

In spite of schools reopening, the challenge with learning losses remains and will be difficult to recover. For example, learners who are currently in Grade 3 were in Grade 1 in 2020 and lost approximately 4-6 months of learning time. Those same students would have ideally been in Grade 2 in 2021, and again lost a significant amount of learning time. These losses are already anticipated to have displaced learners and their levels of literacy, especially in relation to previous generations. It is recognised that even as children return to school, the need for continued educational support remains a major imperative.

2.2 Policy and Strategic Relevance

The DBE has various institutional programmes that are in implementation, guided by the [DBE Action Plan to 2024](#). The Action Plan is intended to “guide the system, in part explaining where the problems lie, and how the various solutions are interconnected” (Department of Basic Education, 2020). It supports Chapter 9 of the [National Development Plan](#) (NDP) and is moreover aligned with the [2019 to 2024 Medium Term Strategic Framework](#) (MTSF) of the Presidency. The Action Plan guides a number of education-specific plans, in particular the five-

⁶ Lack of play opportunities due to COVID confinement- resulted in further psychological trauma for children, with attendant need for psychosocial support for learners, which is one of the prioritised activities by UNICEF using a separate stream of financial support.

year strategic plans of the ten departments dealing with basic education, as well as the annual performance plans of these departments.

Of the five institutional programmes being implemented by the department as part of achieving the Action Plan, the REALS SA programme is in direct alignment with two. The first of the two is Programme 3, which focuses on Teachers, Education Human Resources and Institutional Arrangements. This programme has the overarching aim of “promoting quality teaching and institutional performance through the effective supply, development and utilization of human resources in the basic education sector” (Department of Basic Education, 2021). Sub-programmes include Teacher and Professional Development and Curriculum and Professional Development, which are directly aligned to sub-programmes of the REALS SA programme.

The second relevant programme, Programme 4, focuses on Planning, Information and Assessment with the overarching responsibility of promoting quality and effective service delivery in the basic education system through planning, implementation and assessment. The indicators in this programme are fundamentally directed towards “quality improvements, assessments and physical and financial planning” (Department of Basic Education, 2021). Main outcomes of this programme are to maintain and develop information and other systems which enable transformation and an efficient and accountable sector, and conducting strategic interventions to assist and develop provincial education systems (Department of Basic Education, 2021).

Looking at international development frameworks and commitments, the REALS SA programme is well aligned to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The programme is in direct alignment with goals 4 and 8. Respectively, these goals are to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” as well as to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

By aligning with the abovementioned SDGs, the programme continues the thread of alignment through to the Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the Government of South Africa for the Education for Employability (E4E) action. The agreement describes the purpose of the action, with the overall objective of the financing being “more inclusive, equitable and quality education and employment prospects for South African Youth” (European Commission, 2018).

In keeping with a joint approach to solving challenges in respective countries as exemplified by the above financing agreement, UNICEF is supporting the South African education sector through interventions that are in line with the Education Component of the UN Emergency Flash Appeal. Recognizing that the Covid-19 pandemic was a global challenge, UNICEF advocated for the challenge to be addressed through an inclusive approach based on international solidarity and cooperation among all stakeholders. Complementary to government’s three-pronged strategy, the Emergency Appeal for South Africa “prioritises the

response necessary to address the immediate public health crisis and the secondary impacts of the pandemic” (United Nations South Africa, 2020). The appeal was developed to support the existing coordination efforts of government, stakeholders and other partners with the aim to ensure efficient and effective prevention and response to identified national priorities.

In summary, by achieving direct alignment to policy-related issues, the REALS SA programme is strategically relevant for organisations in the following ways:

- **UNICEF**

By partaking in the REALS SA programme, UNICEF is providing support to the South African government on the continuation of learning, particularly in lower quintile schools. This is in alignment to UNICEF’s cooperation with the DBE on achieving “quality basic education by improving the key determinants that impact the quality of education and educational outcomes...to confront South Africa’s reading and numeracy challenges” (UNICEF, 2022). By doing so, the organisation ensures the stabilisation of the education sector for learners and teachers, and further addresses the newfound need to depend on other forms of media for educational purposes. Finally, there is a generation of lessons in relation to implementing interventions in the worst contexts by implementing the pilot programme in lower quintile schools.

- **DBE**

The DBE’s participation in the REALS SA programme addresses literacy issues, the issue of recovery of learning in schools, the strengthening of the capacity of the education system, the promotion of parental participation in education as well as the upscaling of programmes that are directly aligned to departmental strategic thrusts.

- **NECT**

Finally, for the NECT, this programme will assist with achieving long-term improvements in the education sector generated by a short-term programme.

2.3 Programme description

Considering the South African education sector context, in line with their policies and strategies, and in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the DBE, in collaboration with UNICEF, the NECT and with funding from the EU, developed the REALS SA school support programme to be implemented in 2021 and 2022. The programme aims to cover 650 primary schools in Quintiles 1, 2 and 3 across the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Eastern Cape (EC) and Limpopo (LP). The objective of the programme is to ensure that the Department of Basic Education, Provincial Departments and schools are supported to respond to and manage the impact of Covid-19 on education for improved learning outcomes, including a focus on parental involvement and support.

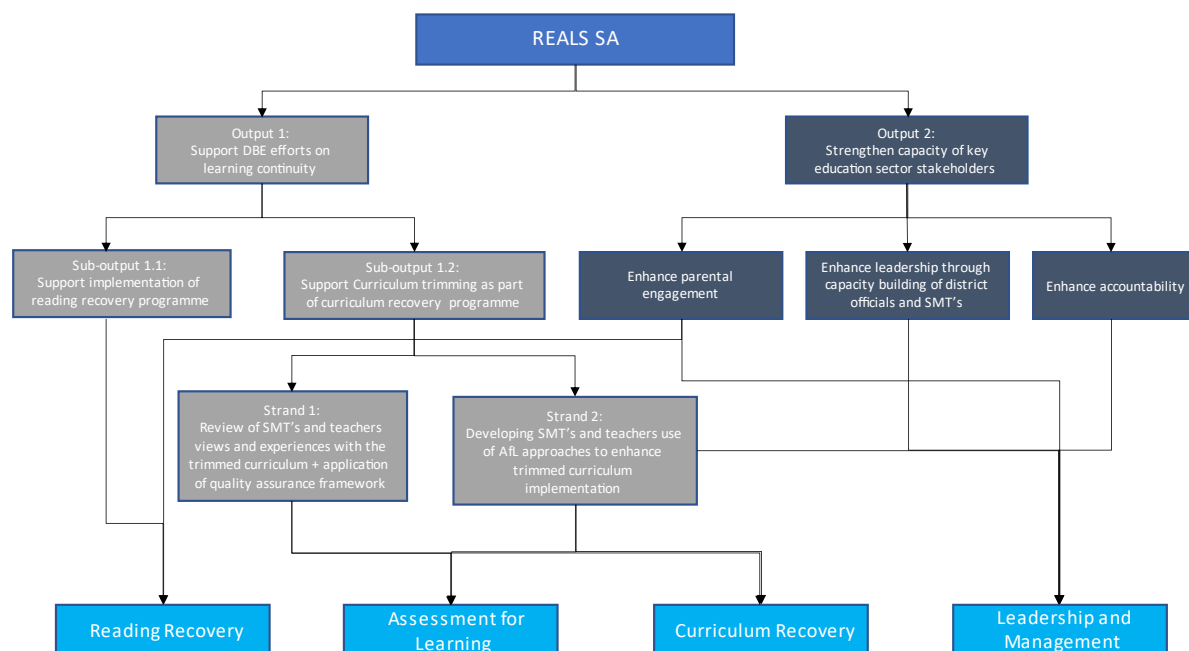


Figure 1: Programme and Sub-Programme Structure

As depicted in Figure 1, the programme design is structured around two main programme outputs. While activities have been separated under two main strands, the anticipated outcomes will have varying levels of relevance across all strands and sub-strands.

The first strand is the provision of support to the Department of Basic Education’s efforts on continuity of learning through traditional and innovative approaches by supporting the implementation of the reading recovery programme for better learning outcomes (sub output 1.1) and curriculum trimming as part of the overall curriculum recovery programme (sub output 1.2). The second output is strengthened capacity of key stakeholders in the education sector and enhanced access to learning materials. The focus in this area is on enhancing parental engagement, accountability, and leadership for sustainability through capacity building of district officials and SMT’s on effective leadership during emergencies and after.

The REALS SA programme is further broken down into sub-programmes (workstreams) focused on achieving the two main programme outputs. The sub-programmes are that of Reading Recovery, Assessment for Learning, Curriculum Recovery as well as Leadership and Management. Each has a defined set of activities which are implemented by a service provider, working closely with the provincial education departments (PEDs) and other REALS SA stakeholders.

A wide range of activities including radio broadcasts with reading content, provision of storybooks, a parent intervention to support reading at home and training of subject advisors and SMTs to support and monitor curriculum delivery have been planned as part of programme implementation. With these activities, the REALS SA programme will be supporting the implementation of the reading recovery programme for better learning outcomes, curriculum trimming⁷ as part of the overall curriculum recovery programme and

⁷ Curriculum trimming simply refers to the process of reducing the content to be covered in the school curriculum given the remaining time in the school year. Further information is provided on page 31.

strengthening the capacity of education sector stakeholders for improved learning outcomes in no fee schools in the selected provinces. The sub-programmes are summarised in Table 2 below and will be further expanded on in section 2.4. Information summarised in Table 2 is sourced from the service level agreements between the service providers and REALS SA programme implementors, as well as REALS SA programme planning documentation.

Table 2: REALS SA sub-programme summaries

	Leadership and Management	Reading Recovery	Recovery Curriculum	Assessment for Learning
Strategic Rationale	Building institutional capacity and resilience of the education sector from departmental down to school level	A quick programme responding to the loss of reading opportunities by providing reading resources, radio broadcasts, and enhancing teacher and parent involvement	A programme to assess whether the current school curriculum is adequate and relevant for the next 10 – 50 years and how it has, and will, affect learner performance	A programme to capacitate districts to enhance support provided to all schools and teachers to improve learning for all learners through improved use of formative assessment.
Anticipated results/benefits	Enhanced school leadership, governance and district officials' capacity to lead during times of crises, through increased accountability measures and parental involvement; increased monitoring of the curriculum and reading recovery.	Addressing reading recovery through creating a storybook package for learners in lower quintile schools, as well as possible radio broadcast programmes related to reading	The reduction of teaching and learning losses by providing tools and support for teachers to implement the recovery curriculum/the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs)	Provision of support to teachers to improve their lesson planning, preparation, and presentation, identify what learners know, understand and can do, and better support ALL learners to address their learning needs
Implementing Partner	Performance Solutions Africa	Independent Consultant	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Tshwane University of Technology
Target Groups	School Governing Bodies (SGBs), School Management Teams (SMTs), District Education Officials, parents	Teachers, learners, and parents	Subject Advisors, Provincial Coordinators, and teachers for GET languages, Mathematics and Science	Subject Advisors
Total sub-programme budget	R5 156 309,00	R 2 421 700,00	R1 382 500,00	R3 826 875,00
	Develop training and coaching programmes for school leadership, governance and districts on Accountability, Emergency response, and Parental involvement	Audit the use of storybooks available in each language at each level as well as reading programmes broadcast on radio	Review the recovery curriculum for coherence, concept, and content gaps	Provide appropriate materials for Subject Advisors to develop their Assessment for Learning knowledge and skills

Key Activities⁸	Training and coaching of SMTs, SGBs, district officials and parents	Create primary book bags per language per geographical area aligned with broadcast materials	Develop a Quality Assurance Framework (tools) to monitor and improve curriculum recovery	Train Subject Advisors on the use of Assessment for Learning practices
		Provide materials to guide parents on learner reading support	Support monitoring and tracking the implementation of curriculum trimming (quality assuring the implementation)	Develop and Maintain the Learner Management System
		Procure bulk printing nationally	Enhance Capacity of subject advisors to support school leaders' and teachers' implement the recovery curriculum through the effective use of assessment for learning approaches that address learners' learning needs and improve learning outcome	
		Support existing / new broadcast programmes		

⁸ Source: (UNICEF, 2021b)

2.3.1 Programme stakeholders

Figure 2 below gives an overview of the stakeholders in the REALS SA programme. It is important to note that this diagram is not intended to show how programme stakeholders interact, as that is captured in Figure 3 as well as in the programme theory.

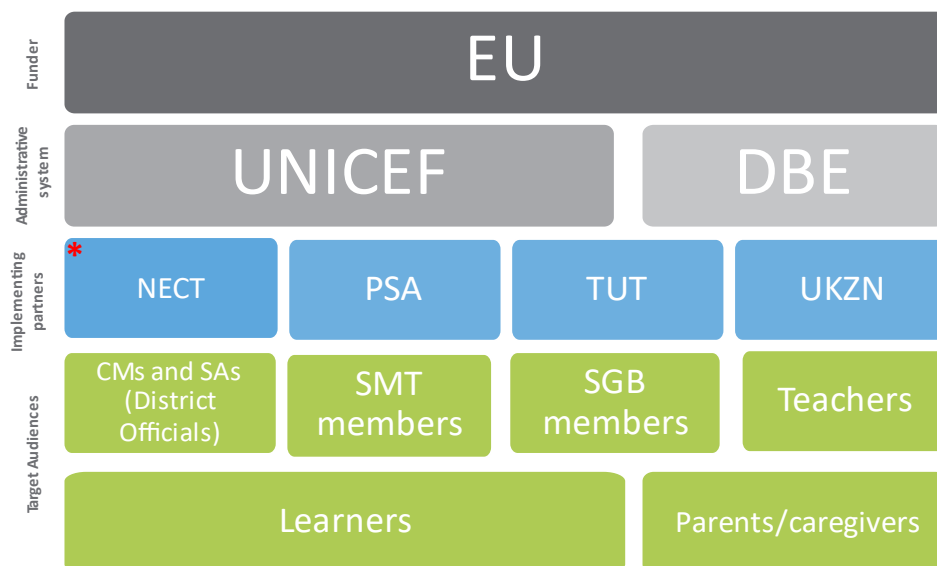


Figure 2: REALS SA Stakeholder Map

As depicted above:

- The EU is the programme funder.
- UNICEF is the programme fiduciary, and is accountable for the overall project design, implementation, monitoring, budget as well as communication and visibility associated with the programme.
- The DBE is the South African government department that owns the intervention.
 - o Together, the DBE and UNICEF form the administrative layer of the programme
- The NECT, PSA, TUT and UKZN are the programme’s implementing partners. The NECT has been noted with a red asterisk as it is the only implementing partner involved in programme governance, as will be discussed in the implementation arrangements.
- Finally, the programme is intended to reach Circuit Managers (CMs) and Subject Advisors (SAs) in their capacities as district officials, Senior Management Team (SMT) members from schools, School Governing Body (SGB) members, schoolteachers as well as learners and their parents / caregivers.

These stakeholders, apart from the funder and target audience, then form various structures that handle different aspect of programme implementation. As shown in Figure 3 below:

- The Programme Steering Committee (PSC) comprises of DBE, the NECT and UNICEF and meets every quarter. This structure is responsible for overall REALS SA strategy and governance

- The Programme Management Team (PMT) comprises of UNICEF, the NECT, a PED counterpart from each of the targeted provinces, as well as DBE officials who serve as chairpersons of the Technical Teams (TTs). This structure is responsible for programme coordination
- Finally, programme operations are overseen by six operations teams, also referred to as TTs. There are 4 respective technical teams for each of the sub-programmes, one for monitoring and evaluation, and one for programme Communications and Visibility.

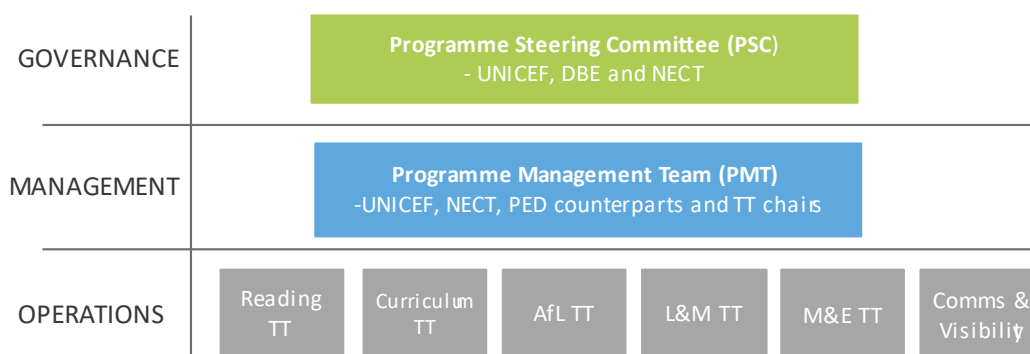


Figure 3: Implementation arrangements

(Source: adapted from NECT documentation)

2.3.2 Programme budget

The REALS SA programme agreement between NECT and UNICEF of April 2021 mentions the project originally had a total budget of R23 250 807, with contributions from UNICEF amounting to R16 219 267 (70%) and R7 031 540.23 (30%) from CSO contributions. However, the program experienced changes in September 2021 as an evaluation programme document amendment addendum was signed resulting in a downward budget adjustment of approximately 30%. Initial consultations with program implementors suggest that the adjustment resulted from a reallocation of direct management of funds back to UNICEF. In summary, according to the most recent financial budget, the largest portion of the budget (47%) has been directed to Education and Recovery of Learning followed by Leadership and Management at 32%, Project Management at 17% and Monitoring and Evaluation at 4%. For further illustration of the funding structure by programme output, see Table 3 below:

Table 3: REALS SA Budget Summary by Workstreams

No	Output	Sub-Output	Budget in Rands	Total Budget in Rands	Total Budget % contribution
1.	Education and Recovery of Learning	Reading Recovery	2 421 700	7 631 075	47%
		Recovery Curriculum	1 382 500		

		Assessment recovery ⁹	3 826 875		
2.	Leadership and Management	Leadership & Management	5 156 309	5 156 309	32%
3.	Monitoring and Evaluation	Monitoring & Evaluation	703 143	703 143	4%
4.	Project Management	Project Management	2 728 740	2 728 740	17%
TOTAL				16 219 267	100%

Sources: Adapted from UNICEF (EU funded) Budget- Annexure 3b- Results Matrix REALS Project (NECT)

During review of the draft Inception Report, the ESC noted that the budget is under further review. The existing documentation is also not entirely clear and the evaluation team has requested further clarity. The above is the evaluation’s team initial high level understanding, and the next phases of the evaluation will be used to obtain a clear, updated account of the budget and changes to date. The evaluation report will work with such a clear, updated account to answer the evaluation questions.

2.4 Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (ToC) is “a tool that describes the process of planned change, from the assumptions that guide its design, the planned outputs and outcomes to the long-term impacts it seeks to achieve” (Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, 2011). In simpler terms, a ToC expresses the underlying logic or reasoning of a programme, explaining what it seeks to achieve and why it is expected that the programmes activities will achieve it. To understand how and if an intervention is working, we need to understand how the activities of the intervention are expected to lead to the desired results—both (a) the causal pathway from activities to outputs to a sequence of outcomes to impacts and (b) the causal assumptions showing why and under what conditions the various links in the causal pathway are expected to work (Mayne, 2015).

How a ToC is portrayed depends on the nature of the programme and its needs. A fairly straightforward intervention with a single goal often has a single diagram that neatly and adequately summarises the intended pathway for the programme. For multifaceted interventions such as the REALS SA programme, multiple approaches can be attempted. One approach would be to try and develop a ToC that captures all the activities from all the sub-programmes and their respective results sequences, capturing the links among the various pathways. However, developing and setting out such a model can be quite challenging, and the resulting model can become cumbersome and hard to work with, either in terms of explaining the intervention or for helping design the evaluation.

⁹ Assessment recovery can be referred to interchangeably with Assessment for Learning

The development of this programme theory has followed the recommended process for compiling a ToC. A situational analysis was done during the inception phase of the programme, where the evaluation team gained a deeper understanding of the needs and problems that the REALS SA programme is intended to address, as well as the resources and opportunities that could have potentially been drawn on to do this. This was done by conducting a desk review of existing programme and relevant documentation, which further explained why the REALS SA programme was conceptualised. The team also interacted with additional information such as relevant research and other evidence from policies, and results from similar interventions. The most crucial step was that of stakeholder engagement – individual interviews as well as a workshop with programme stakeholders – to ensure that the understanding of how the intervention was intended to work is indeed correct and depicted adequately on the summary diagram below. Following this process assisted with uncovering assumptions on which the programme theory is based, contextual factors and how they affect the results we see, links where the causal chains had potential of breaking, as well as risks and causal links that were not well established (Better Evaluation, 2021).

2.4.1 Overview Theory of Change

As discussed in section 2.1 the COVID-19 crisis and school closure has brought havoc on the already underperforming and unequal South African education system. The REALS SA programme will ensure that the DBE, PEDs and schools are supported to respond to and manage the impact of COVID-19 on education for improved learning outcomes in respect of emergency curriculum recovery with a focus on Quintiles 1, 2 and 3 schools in selected provinces, including a critical emphasis on parental involvement and support, also building leadership resilience for future shocks.

The main goal is to support the DBE's interventions geared towards reading recovery, curriculum catch up and systems strengthening for the immediate period of school closures and for the post-closure period where the focus is in line with learner support programmes for online and broadcast support resources, as well as capacity support and system strengthening of the DBE through curriculum recovery and strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders (UNICEF, 2021b).

Evaluation of the Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning during COVID-19 and Beyond Programme (REALS SA) – Full Inception Report

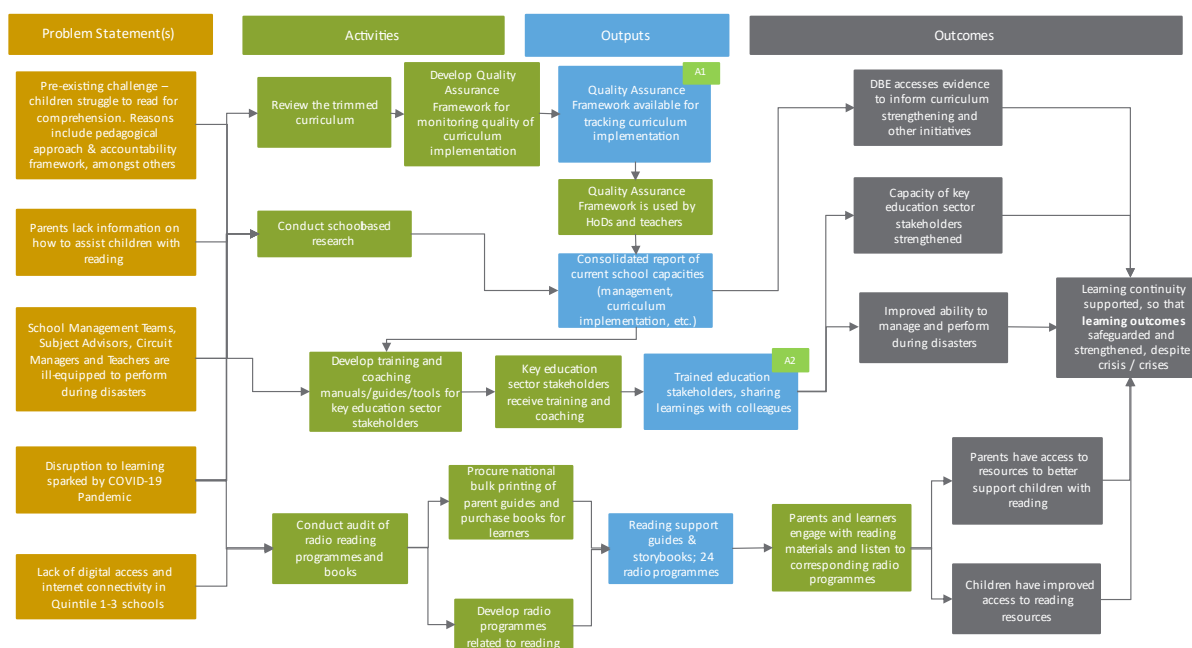


Figure 4: REALS SA Overview ToC

Figure 4 is the overview ToC for the REALS SA programme, depicting the overall causal logic for the various components addressed by the programme itself.

Majority of the problem statements were highlighted by the COVID-19 but had however been historic issues plaguing the South African education sector. These problem statements will be expanded on in further detail in the subsequent nested ToCs, however they are in relation to issues such as the extent of the lack of digital access and internet connectivity in quintile 1-3 schools, an overall disruption to learning due to the school closures in line with national lockdown regulations during the pandemic, as well as the incapacitation of school leadership structures and members thereof to lead adequately during times of crises. Although not immune from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is then the pre-existing challenge of children struggling to read for comprehension due to incorrect pedagogical approaches and dysfunctional accountability frameworks within schools, which is linked to the final problem statement represented on the diagram of parents not having enough information on how to assist children with reading at home.

The specification of these problem statements then sets into motion a series of activities directed towards addressing these issues. The first activity is to conduct a review of the trimmed curriculum that had been implemented since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The review of the curriculum will then shed light on how it is being received by teachers, school leaders and learners, while also highlighting any content and concept gaps that may have formed as part of the curriculum trimming process. Information received from the review will then assist with the development of a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) for continuing to monitor the quality of the trimmed curriculum and its implementation. This results in a QAF being available for use by school officials, and it is assumed to be (A1) comprehensive enough for beneficiaries to begin using it.

After sufficient time has passed, a report on current school capacities in relation to curriculum implementation is compiled informed by the results from the QAF. This, together with school-based research conducted for the purpose of developing a baseline for the programme

produce a consolidated report of current school capacities looking at all aspects from school management abilities to curriculum implementation. This consolidated report is then intended to inform the development of training and coaching materials and workshops to ensure that school leadership and teachers are trained in the areas that have been identified as shortcomings by the consolidated report as well as the original problem statements of the programme.

Once the training and coaching programmes and materials have been developed, key education stakeholders are then recipients of specified training and coaching programmes, resulting in trained stakeholders. The attached assumption (A2) to the training is that it will be delivered in such a way that it makes it easier for trainees to later become trainers to the colleagues, efficiently sharing learnings and approaches with colleagues. The short-term outcome from training the key education sector officials is that their capacity is strengthened, as well as an increased ability to manage and perform during times of crises or disaster. The consolidated report of school capacities also then becomes evidence that the DBE has access to for the purpose of informing curriculum strengthening and other initiatives.

The final set of activities is related to the issues of access to technological and reading resources. The programme conducted a survey of radio reading programmes and books. This audit was then followed by another activity of developing radio programmes that are related to reading, as well as procuring national bulk printing arrangements for the production of parent guides as well as purchasing books for learners. The output from these three activities combined is the availability of reading support guides for parents, storybooks and books for learners as well as 24 radio programmes related to reading materials.

A major activity following the production of the reading support resources is the learners and parents engaging with said materials. This activity is important as there are various factors that could potentially break the causal link between the two ToC components, such as whether or not households have access to the radio, if they listen to the radio at all, if parents have the time and required levels of literacy to effectively engage with the guides, and whether or not parents or learners are interested in improving their reading capabilities.

The short-term outcome from the parents and learners engaging with their respective materials adequately is that parents will then have access to resources that help them better support their children with reading, as well as children having improved access to reading resources.

The DBE having access to evidence to inform policy decisions, increased capacity of key education sector stakeholders to lead and manage, and increased access of parents and learners to reading resources ultimately culminate in learning continuity being supported so that learning outcomes are safeguarded and strengthened despite times of crises.

2.4.2 Characteristics of the REALS SA model (Prescriptive Assumptions)

Before moving into the sub-programme theories of change, it is also worth noting the a few characteristics of the design of the REALS SA programme. These can be viewed as “prescriptive assumptions” in the sense that they reveal a preference for certain approaches to intervention in the sector.



Figure 5. Characteristics of the REALS SA programme

Firstly, the REALS SA programme is designed to **work within and through the education system**¹⁰: DBE worked with UNICEF in conceptualising the programme; and both DBE and the PEDs have formal leadership roles in the programme's governance and implementation. This is in contrast to many education sector interventions which work directly with learners or caregivers, or form relationships directly with individual schools. While the reasons for this implementation approach have not been spelled out in documentation for REALS SA, it is a general principle of UN system organisations to work with governments towards governments' own priorities, in line with governments' own policies. This helps ensure that the programme has the necessary buy-in and cooperation; and that it contributes to systemic change. However, a potential downside is that the intervention becomes affected by the same challenges that face the education system as a whole, such as constrained capacity of the officials involved.

Secondly, two of the sub-programmes rely on a **"train the trainer" model**, in which the REALS SA programme will work directly with a certain group and then expect this group to train others. In part, this approach relies on the one above: working through the education system, the REALS SA programme is targeting groups whose responsibilities formally include the training (in the case of Subject Advisors) or mobilising fellow parents/caregivers in support of the school (in the case of caregivers elected to School Governing Bodies). For this reason, it can indeed be expected that, if thoroughly trained on a topic that is in line with the Department's policy, if they are provided with effective support and are held accountable for implementing the training with teachers, they will indeed do so.

The obvious potential benefit of a "train the trainer" approach is that project resources can be concentrated on a small group while ultimately reaching a much larger group with the same training content and resources. The trade-off is that only a small subset of the target group receives the intervention "first-hand", with the programme having less control over the quality, pace, and reach of the intervention as implemented by the those who were directly trained. This may undermine the achievement of the intended outcomes. The risk that the

¹⁰ Except parents and caregivers of learners.

programme fails to achieve its intended outcomes (to the desired extent) in the broader target population, is heightened by the short life span of the project, where there will be limited time to monitor the rollout beyond the original targeted groups and therefore limited scope for the programme to support or intervene if concerns are picked up. (As pointed out by a stakeholder in reviewing this report, the TOT model should arguably be seen more as a necessary trade-off: outcomes may be attenuated but still represent the best outcome for the available resources. However, there is also discussion underway to provide more support for those trained to implement the model, than what the current programme design provides for. If the programme is extended in this way or gets formally linked to a separate follow-up programme, this will constitute an amendment to programme design and will be noted and evaluated accordingly.)

Third, two of the sub-programmes also involve **communities of practice (COPs)** as part of the intervention strategy. Communities of practice are professional learning communities which are expected to enhance learning outcomes by offering space for peer interaction, supportive relationships, mutual accountability, access to and sharing of resources, learning from shared experiences, and recognition of achievements and good practices. It is also a means to trying to foster ongoing learning within the target group beyond the life span of the direct support of the programme, if COPs can become self-organising and self-leading. Some of the groups who are intended to participate in COPs are already familiar with the notion of COPs, which has the potential to support or detract from the programme's goals (depending on the quality of their pre-existing experiences with this approach). Others will be joining COPs likely for the first time, which means that expectations, ways of working, and leadership roles will need to be clarified for the first time. Again, the limited time span of the programme may pose a risk to the extent to which COPs can become independent and effective by the time of the programme's end.

Fourth, several of the sub-programmes have, as one of their primary aims, the provision of **research evidence to the DBE to inform decision-making**. This assumes that DBE is in need of the type of evidence that will be generated; the appropriate decision makers within DBE will access and engage appropriately with the evidence; and will indeed apply it to future decision making. Some of the decisions that the REALS SA programme seeks to inform are at the policy level (e.g. changes to the curriculum) while some are primarily about how best to roll out / implement existing policies by demonstrating and extracting lessons from practical implementation. The fact that DBE officials chair each of the workstreams is one means by which the programme seeks to ensure appropriate engagement with the emerging evidence that REALS SA is generating.

Finally, several of the sub-programmes are seeking to **pilot an approach, for potential scale-up**. The intent around this is more explicit in some sub-programmes than others. Pilots have both a demonstration effect (practically demonstrating to stakeholders, who are closely involved, how the intervention works); and a lesson learning / evidence generation intent (proving what is feasible and what does and does not work under certain conditions). This design consideration is closely related to the intention to generate evidence to inform DBE decision making, as DBE may use the evidence generated by these sub-programmes to decide whether and how to scale up beyond the REALS SA target schools and groups. It is also closely related to the design consideration around working within the system from the outset, as education sector officials are getting a first-hand demonstration and/or gaining first-hand experience of implementing the interventions. It is thus assumed that some of the sub-

programmes will not only reach the stated REALS SA target groups, but also serve as a step towards the DBE taking the work further and ultimately having a much broader (perhaps system-wide) implementation and impact.

A final design consideration is the mainstreaming of certain priorities into the intervention, such as gender and the environment. It is assumed that explicit consideration of these issues will result in more inclusive outcomes for vulnerable groups; and that the environmental cost can be minimised or that there can be environmental benefits derived. There is also a potential “demonstration effect” here in that education sector stakeholders in the REALS SA programme will be exposed to these approaches and methods and may choose to replicate them elsewhere.

2.4.3 Leadership and Management sub-programme

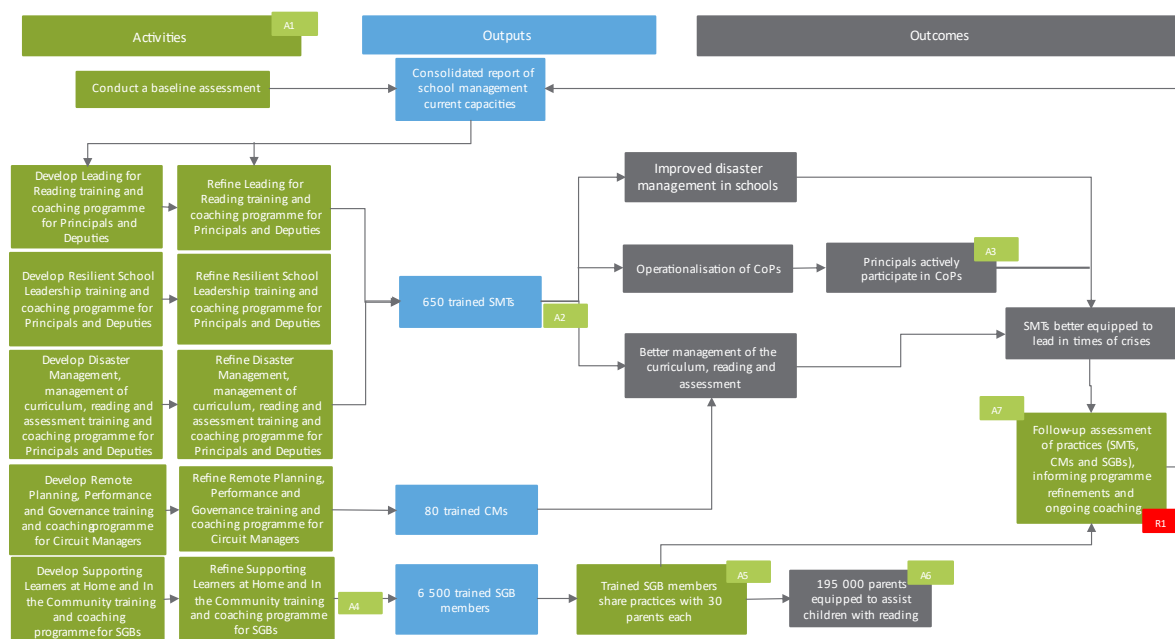


Figure 6: ToC for Leadership and Management

Assumptions:

- A1: The REALS SA programme is adequately resourced, and the issue of resourcing has been sorted for the duration of the programme
- A2: Training receive by principals and deputies was effective, clear and easy to put into practice
- A3: Communities of Practice will remain operation and active
- A4: Minimum of 10 SGB members trained at each targeted school
- A5: Training received by principals and deputies was effective, clear and easy to put into practice, as well as impart knowledge received at training
- A6: Trained SGB members will engage with parents effectively
- A7: Practices that principals, deputy principals, circuit managers and SGBs have been trained on have been implemented

Risks:

- R1: The assessment does not assess the practices of parents

Figure 6 is the ToC for the Leadership and Management (L&M) sub-programme. It depicts how the workstream seeks to ensure that school management and leadership become better equipped to lead in times of crises, but also in general. This is in line with output 2 of the REALS SA programme, which is to “strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders in the education sector and enhance access to learning materials” (UNICEF, 2021b). As further expanded on in programme documentation, the focus of this sub-programme is specifically on enhancing parental engagement, and the accountability and leadership [of school management] during an emergency and after.

Over time the rules of engagement for principals and their deputies have changed as the roles and responsibilities of principals have evolved. Originally, school principals were – and also understood themselves to be – responsible mainly for the management of physical and financial school resources, managing the school as an organisation, managing quality and securing accountability (Bush & Glover, 2016). During times of uncertainty, the nuance that lies within these responsibilities begins to show as school principals are increasingly looked upon by their staff, learners, parents, and their communities for guidance (Bush & Glover, 2016).

As the role of principal's morph with the changing periods of time, it is important that the core responsibilities of the various school leaders remain clearly defined and delimited, as school leaders “can make a difference in school and student performance” if they have the proper capacity, motivation and support to engage in practices that are most conducive to improved learning (Pont, Nusche & Moorma, 2008). The key challenge for most principals is a lack of formal management training and a lack of prioritisation in terms of tasks. There is however increasing evidence both from a local and international context that good school leadership enables schools that work. This motivates and provides reason for Principal-level interventions being strategically the most cost effective of interventions in terms of impact¹¹.

One of the ways in which roles and responsibilities are effectively reiterated is in the form of training and induction programmes, which the L&M sub-programme aims, by design, to provide in abundance. The L&M sub-programme activities begin with conducting a baseline assessment across all the schools participating in the REALS SA programme. The purpose of this assessment is to gauge the capacities of schools and their respective management teams, which will then inform the development of training and coaching programmes that will sufficiently fill the identified gaps. This is however not how it has happened practically, as the baseline assessment commenced alongside the development of training and coaching materials and practices for the intended beneficiaries. It is therefore unlikely that the baseline assessment directly informed the content in the training and coaching programmes. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that the planning of these activities is based on the assumption (A1) that the programme is and will continue to be adequately resourced for its duration. If this assumption does not hold true and the programme is in fact under-resourced at any point in time, it may pose a risk to the completion of tasks and therefore achievement of goals.

The anticipated direct output from the activity of conducting a baseline assessment is a consolidated list of the current capacities of school management structures and/or teams. The insight on current capabilities is then expected to inform the content and manner of delivery of the various training and coaching programmes. For the purposes of addressing the identified shortcomings pre-baseline assessment in the national school environment, the following training and coaching programmes have been identified for school principals and deputy principals as part of the L&M sub-programme:

- Leading for Reading
- Resilient School Leadership in Times of Crisis

¹¹ Jansen, J. & Blank, M. 2014. *How to fix South Africa's schools: lessons from schools that work*. Johannesburg: Bookstorm.

- Participating in and Sustaining Communities of Practice

The training workshops and coaching sessions will theoretically result in 650 trained school principals. It is assumed that the trained SMT members will have been trained adequately and effectively enough to put into practice what they have been trained on (A2). This assumption holding true will then theoretically lead to three immediate outcomes, namely improved disaster management in schools, the operationalization of communities of practice (CoPs) for school principals and better management of the curriculum, reading and assessment within schools. The third assumption to note is linked to the operationalization of CoPs (A3), which is that they will remain operational and active post-REALS SA programme, enabling principals to actively participate in said communities.

Continued observation and active participation in the maintenance of the short-term outcomes will then lead, over time, to principals being better equipped to lead in times of crises, as well as under normal circumstances.

In addition to the training of principals¹², the sub-programme also intends to train and coach Circuit Managers (CMs) on Remote Planning, Performance and Governance. The 277 trained CMs¹³ from the programme will then supplement the better management of the curriculum, reading and assessment, in addition to the SMTs, also ultimately contributing to the SMTs arsenal for leading during crises.

The final training component is directed towards School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and focuses on their ability to Support Learners at Home and in the Community. While SGBs have wide responsibilities and have become increasingly more accountable for school improvement, they have not received enough support. Evidence points to problems such as tensions between SGBs and principals because of lack of demarcation between their roles, shortages of potential members to serve on boards, a high level of absenteeism of members and the lack of required knowledge or skills (Pont, Nusche & Moorma, 2008). As already mentioned above, clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities between school leadership structures better enables each to perform optimally, while also being capacitated on how to adequately carry out their respective responsibilities.

The direct output from the training programme is a combined total of 6 500 trained parents and SGB members, based on the assumption (A4) that a minimum of 10 SGB members will be trained at each beneficiary school. It is imperative to note that this assumption has a high probability of not holding as true, since the majority of schools have SGBs of less than 10 members in total. The trained SGB members will then have the responsibility of sharing the practices they were trained and coached on in the programme with 30 parents from the community each, ensuring a wide reach within the community. This is again based on the assumption (A5) that the training received by SGB members will be efficient and coherent enough for the SGB members to impart the knowledge received at the training to members of the community, who may potentially be less educated. Trained SGB members will then

¹² Original plans were to also train deputies, but budget cuts necessitated scaling down in this regard.

¹³ Original programme documentation estimated 80 Circuit Managers would be reached. This appears to have been an estimate at the stage of high-level programme design; and the much larger number was arrived at when operationalising the programme with the implementing partner.

engage with parents effectively (A6) enough for the programme to have successfully reached 195 000 parents, equipping them with the necessary knowledge to assist children with reading at home and within the community. Engagements with the implementing partner have highlighted that the number of parents the programme plans to reach is quite ambitious given programme implementation progress. This insight, together with assumption number 4, bring into question the number of beneficiaries this sub-programme will realistically be able to reach by time of completion.

In addition to directly reaching parents within the community, the interaction of trained SGB members with parents in the community is, by design, to be followed by a follow-up assessment by the service provider PSA, to appraise L&M practices of SMTs, CMs and SGBs. The intention of this follow-up assessment is to inform the programme refinements that need to be made in order for coaching to continue, and remain relevant to the contexts of the beneficiaries, hence the feedback loop depicted in the diagram, feeding back into a second consolidated report of school management capacities.

The follow-up assessment is conducted based on the assumption (A7) that SMTs, CMs and SGBs have been implementing what they were trained and coached on, due to the period of time that would have been allowed to lapse between the initial period of training and the follow-up assessment. Additionally, an underlying risk (R1) with the assessment is that it does not follow-up on the practices of parents and caregivers within the community, and therefore does not gauge how practices within the home have changed – or not – in order to inform the next iteration of training and coaching for SGB members.

2.4.4 Recovery Curriculum sub-programme

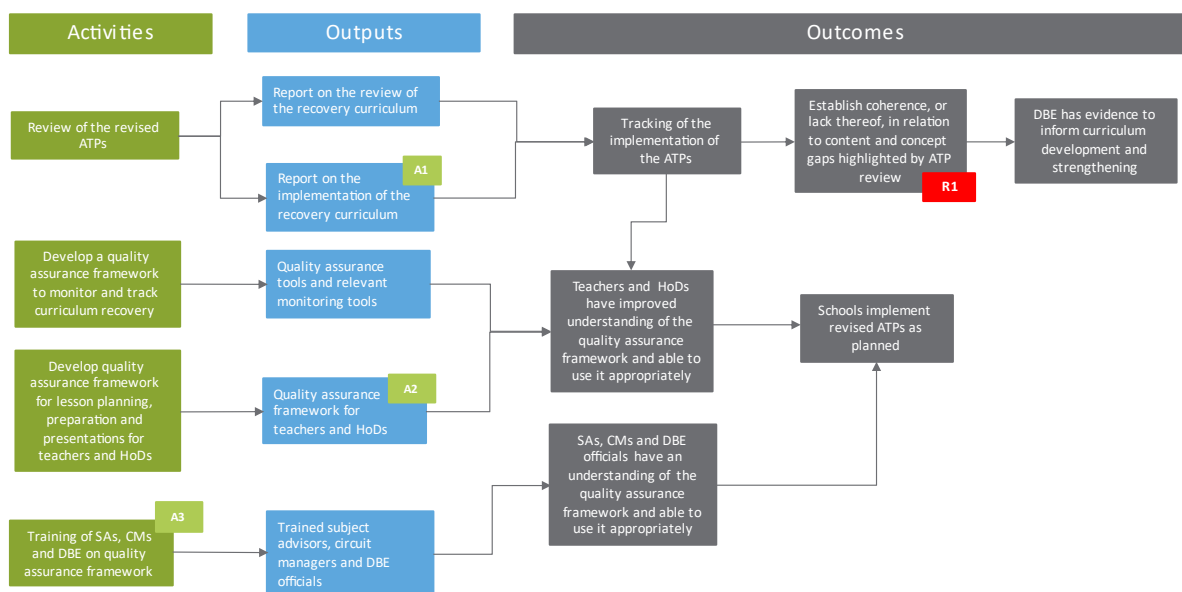


Figure 7: ToC for Recovery Curriculum

Assumptions:

- A1: The Quality Assurance Framework has been applied/used
- A2: School teachers and HoDs understand the QA Framework and can monitor implementation against elements of the framework
- A3: Curriculum coverage tools will be in a digital format

Risks:

- R1: Lack of clarity on the value of conducting a curriculum review, speaking to bigger issues in curriculum design and development

Figure 7 is the ToC for the Recovery Curriculum sub-programme, which is a quick programme to assess whether the current school curriculum is adequate and relevant for the next 10-50 years, and how it has, and will, affect learner performance. This is in line with the first strand of sub-output 1.2, which is to conduct “a review of SMTs’ and teachers’ views and experiences with the trimmed curriculum and the application of a quality assurance framework for monitoring curriculum implementation” (UNICEF, 2021b).

A school curriculum is often looked at as a means to provide content and coherence to education policies. Consensus reflected in the curriculum can provide a reference framework for putting learner welfare and development at the core of the education system (Amadio, Opertti & Tedesco, 2013). It is however evident that school curriculums often cannot encompass everything that needs to be learnt at the personal, social, professional, ethical and cultural levels (Amadio, Opertti & Tedesco, 2014), even in normal circumstances. There are new and profound transformations that are “affecting our societies, and the dilemmas and tensions that have accumulated in the search for an agreement on what, for what and how to educate in order to respond effectively to the expectations and demands of young people and the various social sectors in a century characterized by uncertainties” (Amadio, Opertti & Tedesco, 2014).

The start of the Covid-19 pandemic led to lost learning time as school's shutdown and ultimately reopened with several changes to the schooling environment, which included social distancing protocols, the rotational attendance and the intermittent closure of schools due to increased localised infections. To mitigate the impact of lost time, the recovery process is expected to occur over a three-year period, straddling 2021 to 2023, to gradually recover the learning losses, while building on foundational content required for the next grade. The multi-year recovery plan also ensures that the impact of further learning losses are minimised.

The purpose of curriculum reorganisation and trimming is to reduce the envisaged curriculum to manageable core content including skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values so that schools have ample room for deep and meaningful learning. It also needs to define the core knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be taught and assessed so that it provides guidance and support to teachers and aligns curriculum content and assessment to the available teaching time. Curriculum trimming will then be able to maintain the alignment in the learning trajectory for learners, without compromising learners' transition between and within the grades, and presents a planning tool to inform instruction during the remaining school terms.

The first activity as part of the recovery curriculum sub-programme is an initial review of the trimmed curriculum for coherence, concept and content gaps. This review will produce two reports: one on the review of the recovery curriculum, and another on the implementation of the recovery curriculum. The implementation report will be compiled based on the assumption (A1) that the quality assurance framework has been used/applied. The availability of these reports enables the continued tracking of the implementation of the ATPs over time. This continued tracking supplements the understanding that the respective role-players have of the quality assurance framework and its use, and also assists with establishing coherence (or lack thereof) in relation to content and concept gaps highlighted by the ATP reviews. The risk (R1) related to the establishment of content and concept coherence is that there is a lack of clarity on the value of conducting a curriculum review, speaking to bigger issues in curriculum design and development nationally.

Following the review is the development of a quality assurance framework for the purpose of monitoring and tracking the rate of curriculum recovery, the first output from this sub-programme is appropriate quality assurance and monitoring tools. Once the framework, along with the tools, have been developed, there is then the activity of developing frameworks specifically for lesson planning, preparation and presentations for schoolteachers and Heads of Departments (HoDs). This results in a quality assurance framework for teachers and HoDs. Once these frameworks have been developed, there is the assumption (A2) that schoolteachers and HoDs understand the respective frameworks and can monitor implementation against elements of the frameworks. The development of these frameworks is supplemented with the training of Subject Advisors (SAs), Circuit Managers (CMs) and the DBE on the quality assurance framework. This training taking place is based on the assumption (A3) that all curriculum coverage tools are in a digital format. If tools are in a format other than digital, this may hinder the progression of the training on the use of the tools. This training results in trained respective role-players who are able to adequately use the tools.

The availability of the quality assurance framework and tools, as well as the respective role-players being trained on the framework, is anticipated to lead to teachers, HoDs, SAs, CMs and DBE officials having an understanding of the quality assurance framework and are able to use it appropriately. This improved understanding of the framework will then lead to schools

being able to implement the revised Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) as planned. Furthermore, once the concept and content gaps have been highlighted and coherence established, the DBE will then have the required evidence to inform curriculum development and strengthening going forward.

2.4.5 Reading Recovery sub-programme

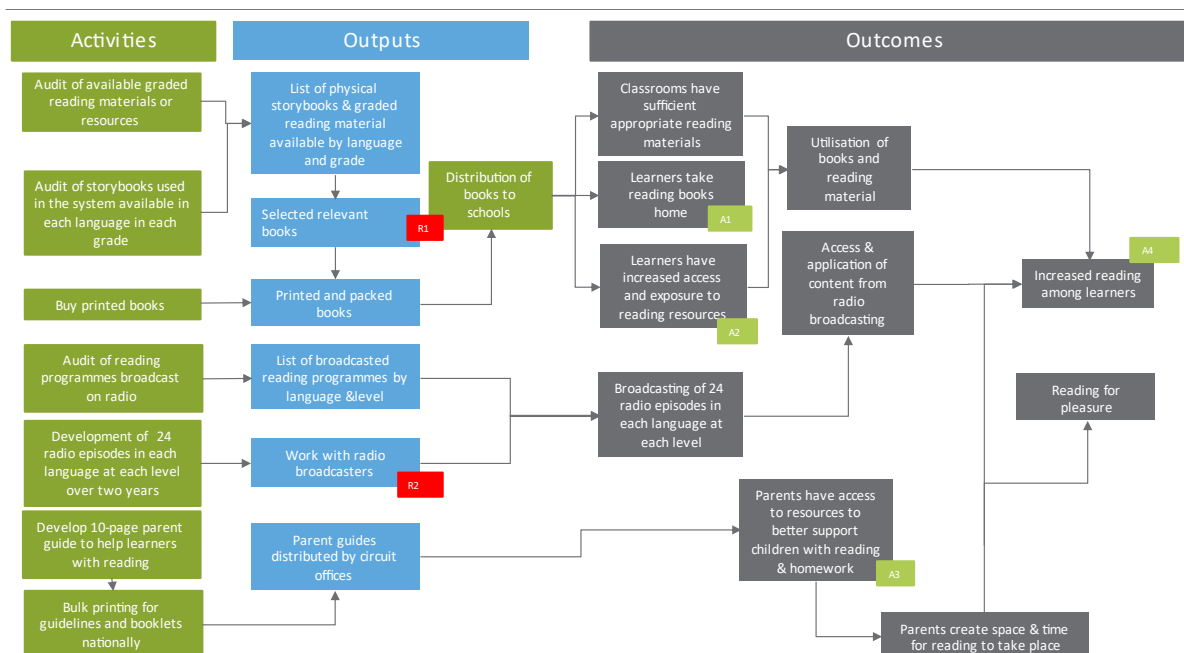


Figure 8: ToC for Reading Recovery

Assumptions

- A1: Learners bring the books back to school
- A2: There is willingness /ability to engage with material and guidelines provided
- A3: Booklets are in home language and are simplified
- A4: There are other complementary interventions

Risks

- R1: There are limited reading material for certain languages and/or grade
- R2: Limited feedback from radio stations

Figure 8 is the ToC for the reading recovery programme, which is in direct relation to sub-output 1.1 of supporting the implementation of the reading recovery programme for better learning outcomes. The justification for the specific focus on reading recovery is based on research that shows that the world is facing a global reading crisis as many countries have challenges with children, youth and adults who are unable to read with comprehension. Under-performance in reading has consequences way beyond primary schooling as learners who cannot read fall behind in the early grades and struggle to catch up academically and successfully complete their education or find jobs.

SA's children are amongst some of the poorest performers in international reading assessments, often faced with the additional challenges of resource-poor communities associated with low levels of parental literacy, lack of or limited access to books in all home

languages, especially African languages -including Braille-, and insufficient exposure to reading as a part of daily life. For most learners, English is the first additional language, but the “Incremental Introduction of African Languages Policy” stipulates that first additional language must be an African language for learners for whom English or Afrikaans is the home language. Adding to the complexity is the fact that Foundation Phase learners are taught all subjects through their home language as the language of learning and teaching and then switch to English from Grade 4.

It is based on this justification that the reading recovery sub-programme aims to create storybook packages for learners in primary schools as well as supporting radio broadcasts of reading programmes. The sub-programme begins with conducting an audit of available graded reading materials or resources, as well as of storybooks used in the system available in each language in each grade. These audits produce a list of physical storybooks and graded reading material available by language and grade, from which relevant storybooks are to be selected. A risk (R1) to be aware of for the selection of relevant books from the audit list is that there are limited reading materials for certain languages and/or grades.

The selection of relevant books is supplemented by the purchasing of printed books, and together these two results in a set of printed and packed books ready for distribution. The books are distributed to the various schools, with the anticipated outcomes being that classrooms will have sufficient appropriate reading materials available, that learners will take the available books home based on the assumption (A1) that they will return them, and learners will have increased access and exposure to reading resources based on the assumption (A2) that there is a willingness and/or an ability to engage with the materials and guidelines provided. These three particular outcomes overall contribute to the utilisation of books and reading materials, increasing reading among learners. Training around this is included through the Leading for Reading workshop followed by coaching of principals (i.e. the implementing partner working with principals will be implementing components of both the leadership and management, as well as reading recovery workstreams).

The next audit is that of reading programmes broadcast on radio, with the direct output being a list of broadcasted reading programmes by language and level. Related to that is the development of 24 radio episodes in each language at each level over a period of two years, with the output of that activity being working directly with radio broadcasters. This output runs the risk (R1) of being negatively affected by limited feedback and interaction from radio stations, potentially halting the development and broadcasting of radio programmes. The list of existing radio reading programmes that are being broadcasted, in addition to the collaboration with the radio broadcasters will help with identifying appropriate content for the radio episodes that are to be developed, with the target being 24 radio reading programme episodes being broadcasted in each language at each level. This will, over time, increase the access and application of content from radio broadcasting, also increasing the rate of reading among learners. It is worth noting that the ultimate increase in reading among learners is also based on the assumption (A4) that there are other complementary interventions running parallel to the distribution of bookbags and radio reading programmes.

Finally, to address the component of parents being better equipped to assist children with learning to read at home, a 10-page parent guide will be developed, and bulk printing procured for printing said guidelines and booklets nationwide. This will result in the availability of parent guides, which will be distributed by the SGB members and parents trained through

the leadership and management sub-programme, as and when they engage further with parents. The distribution of these guides is anticipated to lead to parents having access to the resources they need to better support their children at home with reading and homework, with the assumption (A3) that these guides are in the respective home languages and easy for parents to use. Once parents have access to these resources at home, they are then anticipated to be able to create space and time for reading to take place within the home, ultimately increasing the rate of reading among learners as well as reading for pleasure outside of a school environment.

2.4.6 Assessment for Learning sub-programme

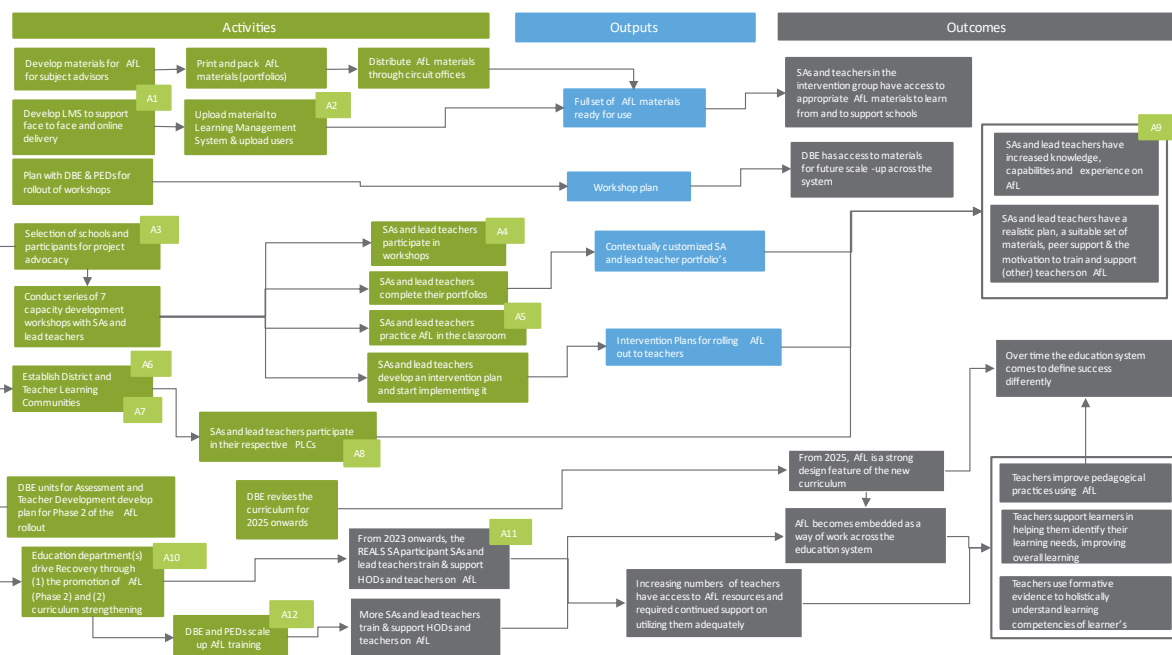


Figure 9: ToC for Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assumptions

- A1: Online access is needed for ease of access in future and/or disasters
- A2: The LMS facilitates discussion and interaction among participants
- A3: SAs will own the process if they inform selection of teachers and schools.
- A4: SAs will own the process and material, and ensure it is fit for local context, as they practiced and revise the material themselves to an extent.
- A5: SAs can only teach others if they can do it themselves.
- A6: Existing learning communities are few and unlikely to suit AfL training needs
- A7: PLCs are important as reflection and articulation of learning is a critical part of the consolidation of learning.
- A8: No direct REALS SA support needed to lead and ensure longevity of these PLCs.
- A9: SAs convey their newfound knowledge, capabilities and experience to teachers after current project ends, noting plans to fund Phase 2 and Phase 3 of this subprograms to provide effective support for teacher to develop and implement the AfL in their classrooms.
- A10: In the absence of someone driving it, former REALS SA participating SAs may not all roll out AfL to teachers as planned.

- A11: By applying this approach to sharing knowledge on AfL, Subject Advisors will be improving their support as opposed to simply monitoring for compliance
- A12: Resources, roles and responsibilities to be confirmed
- A13: Inclusion of teachers to participate in workshops facilitate support for SAs to develop their AfL knowledge and skills
- A14: By participating in workshops, these same teachers also develop the potential to lead the initiative at their schools to serve as in their schools.

Figure 9 above is the ToC for the Assessment for Learning (AfL) sub-programme. This is in line with strand two of sub-output 1.2, which “focuses on developing teachers’ and SMTs’ use of AfL approaches to enhance the implementation of the trimmed curriculum in order to improve teaching and learning” (UNICEF, 2021b).

Classroom activities often involve an element of assessment, which is a fundamental process in promoting learning. It is important for learners to understand the aim of learning, why they need to learn what they are taught, where they are in terms of achieving the aim, and what they need to do in order to achieve the aim (Perotta & Whitelock, 2017). Assessment for learning (AfL) is an approach to teaching and learning that “creates feedback which is then used to improve students’ performance. Students become more involved in the learning process and from this gain confidence in what they are expected to learn and to what standard” (Cambridge University, 2017). It is often described as the approach used to ‘close the gap’ between where a learner is currently and where they want to be in terms of their learning trajectories or goals.

In practice, the application of AfL applies to the use of all assessment evidence for improving learning and teaching. In this application AfL manifests in two ways: (i) formative assessment, and (ii) formative use of summative assessment results. This sub-programme focuses on the former, and thus includes all instances where teachers make professional judgements on learners’ performance in every teaching and learning session undertaken, whether consciously or subconsciously. Using these professional judgements and translating them into feedback on the quality of individuals’ work during the teaching and learning process is the focus of AfL. Teachers, therefore, need training and support to enable them to make valuable assessment decisions, to provide quality feedback to learners, and to teach learners to receive feedback positively and use the information contained within it effectively to improve their work. By introducing AfL now, opportunities for teachers to develop their assessment and feedback skills while promoting confidence in their professional judgement and fostering an effective learning environment are being developed.

It is based on this information that the AfL workstream has three ‘phases’ embedded into its programme logic; Phase 1 focusses on developing capacity of subject advisors, Phase 2 on supporting subjects advisors to develop the capacity of teachers; and Phase 3 on supporting subjects advisors to provide effective support for teachers to integrate AfL approaches into their pedagogical practices capacity of teachers.. It is important to note that according to programme stakeholders, the focus in the REALS-SA project for the AfL sub-programme is ONLY on Phase 1 of a three Phase programme, although discussions are underway to extend it.

Resource development begins with the development of AfL materials for Subject Advisors (SAs), followed by the printing and packaging of these materials, and ending with the distribution of the materials through circuit offices. Based on the assumption (A1) that online access is needed for ease of access in future and/or disasters, the second activity is the development of a Learner Management System (LMS) on the Moodle¹⁴ platform for the purpose of supporting both face-to-face and online delivery. Once the LMS has been developed, materials and users will be added to the system, with the assumption (A2) that the system [will] facilitates discussions and interaction among learners enhancing learning beyond a mere set of online materials. The direct output from the creation and population of the LMS, alongside the creation and distribution of the AfL materials¹⁵ is a full set of AfL materials that are ready for use. The availability of these materials then increases the access that SAs and teachers have to appropriate AfL materials and use them for learning purposes but also for supporting schools in their respective capacities. Finally, UKZN will work together with the DBE and PEDs to plan a workshop rollout, resulting in a workshop plan that will then lead to the DBE having access to the AfL materials for further upscaling across the system.

Once the materials are available and the workshop plan has been compiled, with the materials handed over to the DBE for availability across the system, the next activity is advocating for the AfL sub-programme. This activity entails UKZN working with the SAs to have a selection of approximately 20 teachers, including at least 1 HoD per school from 3-5 schools in each district. Working closely with SAs is encouraged in this activity, based on the assumption (A3) that SAs will own the process if they inform selection of teachers and schools. After the participating schools have been selected, there will then be a series of 7 capacity development workshops conducted with SAs and the 20 selected teachers. Based on the assumption (A4) that SAs will own the process and material, and ensure it is fit for local context, as they practiced and developed the material themselves to an extent, SAs and the 20 teachers will then participate in the workshops. Furthermore, they will complete their portfolios, practice AfL in the classroom once they understand these practices themselves (A5) and develop an intervention plan with the aim of implementing it soon.

A separate activity following on from the selection of participating schools and individuals, is the establishment of District and Teacher Learning Communities, also referred to as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The establishment of these PLCs is based on two assumptions: the first being (A6) that there are only a few existing learning communities, and they are unlikely to suit AfL training needs, and the second being (A7) that PLCs are important spaces for reflection and articulation of learning among peers, facilitating the continuation of learning through peers. The establishment of the PLCs is then to be followed by SAs and teachers who have been trained in Phase 1 participating in their respective PLCs with no direct REALS SA support needed to lead and ensure longevity of these PLCs. This is based on the assumption (A8) that teachers are familiar with PLCs and know how to facilitate and participate in them according to DBE policy. It is worth noting that this may be new territory for SAs in terms of implementing PLCs for themselves as peers, however they should also be

¹⁴ Moodle is a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators, and learners with a single, robust, secure and integrated system to create personalised learning environments.

¹⁵ Online materials, videos, animations, etc.

able to do so. The underlying expectation with these PLCs is that participants will lead these groups from day 1 and will continue to do so beyond the life of the TUT project.

The range of activities following the workshops and establishment of the PLCs is then the availability of contextually customised portfolios, as well as intervention plans for rolling AfL out to teachers. Based on the assumption (A9) that SAs can convey their newfound knowledge, capabilities and experience to teachers after TUT project ends, both these outputs culminate in SAs and the teachers who participated in the Phase 1 training having increased knowledge, capabilities and experience on AfL, as well as SAs having a realistic intervention plan accompanied by a suitable set of materials and peer support to train and support other teachers on AfL. It is worth noting that this assumption runs a risk of not holding true, as past experiences of TUT have shown that further support is almost always required for these outcomes to remain possible.

The third and final phase of the sub-programme is the building of capacity through beneficiaries that have been trained through the programme. Before elaborating the chain of logic for this phase, it is important to note that these activities are beyond the scope of the REALS SA programme and should ideally be carried out by DBE in collaboration with the PEDs to adequately upscale the programme and expand overall REALS SA programme impact. One of the activities in this phase is the DBE's revision of the curriculum for 2025 onwards, with the anticipated outcome of AfL being a strong design feature of the new curriculum. This is then anticipated to prompt change within the education system, with success being defined in terms of learning outcomes achieved rather than test scores on their own.

DBE units for Assessment and Teacher Development are also expected to develop a plan for phase 2 of the AfL rollout, particularly drawing on examples and lessons from the REALS SA pilot programme. Following from the assumption (A10) that without a champion steering the process, former REALS SA participating SAs may not all roll out AfL to teachers as planned, PEDs will be expected to ensure curriculum recovery through the promotion of AfL and curriculum strengthening. By applying this approach (A11) to sharing knowledge on AfL, SAs will be improving their support as opposed to simply monitoring for compliance, enabling the REALS SA participants to train and support HoDs and teachers on AfL from 2023 onwards. This, together with AfL becoming a prominent design feature of the curriculum, will lead to AfL becoming a pedagogical strategy across subjects, grades and phases, SMTs and other levels will also refer to it, and will also become central to curriculum management.

Following from the PEDs driving curriculum recovery and the assumption (A12) that resources, roles and responsibilities are still to be confirmed, DBE and PEDs will then scale up the AfL training. This will then lead to more SAs and teachers training and supporting HoDs and teachers on AfL, as they complete their respective AfL training. Over time, an increasing number of teachers will have increased knowledge, capabilities, and experience on AfL, access to AfL resources, peer support through the PLCs and support as well as accountability from SAs.

The increasing number of teachers being exposed to AfL resources, together with AfL becoming a strong design feature of the new curriculum, there are three anticipated outcomes that come together to ultimately contribute to the education system defining success in terms of learning outcomes achieved rather than test scores on their own. The first is that teachers will improve their pedagogical practices using AfL, with the ability to identify

specific learning needs of all learners and proceed to address the needs accordingly. Secondly, teachers will be able to support learners in identifying and addressing their own learning needs, which will ultimately assist with improving learning rather than test scores only. Thirdly, the mindsets of teachers shift from making summative judgements to using formative evidence to understand the learning competencies of learners more holistically.

3 Evaluation Framework and Methodology

The evaluation type is a combination of **design and implementation**; while the evaluation methodology will be **mixed-methods**.

The combination of design and implementation evaluation types, as called for in the TOR, has been affirmed as suitable during the Inception Phase. Design evaluations are defined by DPME as exercises that are conducted after an intervention has been designed, focusing on “analysing the theory of change as well as the inner logic and consistency of a programme” (Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, 2014). Design evaluation can be done either before or during programme implementation to assess whether or not the theory of change is holding true. In addition to the theory of change, the quality of indicators and the underlying assumptions are also assessed, using only secondary information. Implementation evaluations, also referred to as process evaluations, are assessments of “programme delivery, strategies, procedures and processes, with the aim of answering questions about what is happening in practice, how it is happening and why it is happening” (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2014).

Combining the two evaluation types will allow for the programme evaluation to adequately assess the design of the programme and take it a step further by beginning to look at the early stages of implementation, providing comprehensive information about the quality of programme processes and outputs.

A mixed-method approach including quantitative and qualitative research methods will be used to adequately answer both design and implementation questions. Where quantitative research explains phenomena by collecting numerical data and analysing said data using mathematically based methods, qualitative research seeks to answer questions about why and how people behave in the way they do, providing in-depth information about human behaviour (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2003).

A mixed methods design is appropriate for answering research questions that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods could answer alone and can be used to gain a better understanding of connections or contradictions between qualitative and quantitative data. The draft data collection plan creates space for participants to have a voice and share their experiences across the research process, and they can facilitate different avenues of exploration that enrich the evidence and enable questions to be answered more deeply. The possibility of statistically calculating and attributing impact was eliminated both due to the non-randomised nature of intervention rollout, and the timing of the evaluation during the period when results are expected to be realised up to the level of early outcomes, at best.

A **case study approach** will also be utilised. The case studies will produce qualitative perspectives on how and why the REALS programme works or doesn't work under certain conditions. In addition, the case studies are intended to understand the context in which the programme is working in such a way to elicit lessons for future programmes of this nature. Furthermore, the case studies will provide a broader perspective on overall programme wide data.

Finally, the evaluation will be guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines extensively discussed in section 3.7.

3.1 Evaluation criteria and questions

The original Terms of Reference (TOR) included 26 questions. In relation to these questions, the following decisions were made during the inception phase.

1. Adjustment of the implementation fidelity related questions. We proposed questions which were broader than those in the original TOR, as we believe this will allow for a more comprehensive assessment of the intervention. That said, the questions will be answered paying special attention to the issues that were highlighted in the original TOR. This was approved by the ESC.
2. Even with our proposed adjustments, there are still 23 questions, which is a large scope considering the data collection methods and evaluation scope. The team proposed a focus primarily on addressing each of the criteria, using the sub-questions as guidelines as to what to focus on. The team added an online survey and will leverage monitoring data and any other cost-effective means of supplementing the original data collection plan, but some sub-questions may nevertheless only have a single data source. The matrix notes limitations pertaining to outcomes in particular. This was discussed as part of the introductory discussions with members of the ESC and as part of consultations on Inception Report Version A.
3. The evaluation team commits to transparent discussion of the strength of evidence on which its findings are based. This means highlighting explicitly where there has been limited triangulation of sources. Question (q.) was also added specifically to advise the ESC on how the evidence base on certain questions can be strengthened going forward.
4. Gender and equity perspective has been added into the evaluation questions. An Equity Analysis Guideline has been developed (included as an Annexure) to apply a set of equity-focused criteria that considers dimensions, including gender, human rights (access, race, religious beliefs), and social inclusion (income, physical attributes, geographical location) and the environment. This is in reference to evaluation question (j.). The criteria will be used by the evaluation team to guide and inform their data collection from an equity perspective, and in the main, to evaluate the extent to which equity considerations have been mainstreamed in the planning and implementation of REALS SA.
5. One of the original questions called for the benchmarking of the programme's value for money against other comparable programmes. By mutual agreement, given that such programmes were hard to identify and obtain this type of data for, the key evaluation questions have been adapted to focus on cost drivers and a comparison

between what was originally budgeted and what happened in practice. The evaluation matrix presents the intended analysis in this regard.

Below are the final evaluation questions:

Evaluation Questions
DESIGN
Relevance: To what extent is the programme’s objectives and design responsive to beneficiaries’ needs. Is the REALS SA theory of change designed in a manner that is likely to lead to the anticipated results?
a. Is there a coherent theory of change underpinning the REALS SA project as a whole? To what extent does the Programme’s intervention logic, including its goals and objectives include gender and equity considerations?
b. To what extent did key stakeholders in the project have a shared understanding of the programme design, purpose, and theory of change?
c. What are the different elements (to be identified and defined) in the interventions which are <u>intended to be</u> influencing change?
d. Which of these elements can be expected to change and improve classroom practice?
e. Are the assumptions underpinning the theory of change plausible, and cognisant of difference?
f. What are the implementation modalities being used in the interventions? How equity sensitive are these?
g. Are there any envisaged obstacles or risks to smooth implementation, and have these been sufficiently planned for?
h. Is the design uniform or customised for different schools and equity factors, bearing in mind that schools will receive language specific resources (functionality, level of engagement)?
i. To what extent might we expect the REALS SA project, if implemented as planned, to achieve its intended outcomes?
j. To what extent was gender equality, child rights and other equity considerations mainstreamed within the design and implementation of the programme? Such as gender, race, religious beliefs, income, physical attributes, geographical location, environment, and/or other related and relevant status
Sustainability: to what extent are the net benefits from the programme likely to continue
k. What are the main cost drivers in the REALS SA design?
l. Make recommendations for an exit and sustainability plan that is inclusive and equity sensitive
IMPLEMENTATION
Effectiveness: To what extent has the programme achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and results? To what extent we the REALS SA interventions implemented with fidelity
m. Did all the planned elements of the REALS SA programme get implemented as planned? In other words, to what extent did each of the four workstreams mobilise the resources, conduct the activities, and produce the outputs as planned? (With a focus on training, gender and equity considerations as intended, “reach” (e.g. nr of parents listening to broadcasts; nr of SMT members who attended sessions) and the distribution of materials.)
n. How were the initiatives received by the intended target groups (teachers, SMTs, SGBs, principals, parents, circuit managers and subject advisors, learners) and why?
o. So far, to what extent has each workstream contributed to changes in the attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities of the target groups? How does this align with what was intended for each workstream?
p. So far, what evidence is there that the initiatives have contributed to changes in the behaviour of the target groups? How does this align with what was intended for each workstream?
q. In the short to medium term, what further evidence would help to strengthen REALS-SA decision-makers’ understanding of the above changes?
Relevance: To what extent were the REALS SA programme’s interventions relevant?
r. How appropriate and relevant were materials provided through REALS SA in terms of gender & equity considerations, language and level?
s. To what extent are the REALS SA materials being used?
t. How well are teachers implementing the trimmed curriculum and how effectively have the REALS SA interventions managed to support this? Teachers are being trained to design and develop the tools for monitoring. Were the tools designed and implementors trained?
Efficiency: To what extent were the programme’s interventions undertaken in an economic manner? This being the efficient conversion of inputs into outputs and outcomes in a cost-effective manner.
u. What were the actual costs of the REALS SA project, disaggregated into the main elements? How did this compare to what was planned?
w. What are the lessons for improving programme implementation in the future if similar support programmes are conducted?

3.2 Evaluation matrix

The evaluation matrix, attached as an annexure, shows the methods by which the evaluation questions will be addressed. The team requests the ESC to scrutinise this section in particular, as ESC members may be aware of data sources that have not yet been identified by the team. Methods, including sampling, fieldwork logistics, data management and analytical approaches, are described in more detail in the following sections.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Logical framework

The logical framework is a tool used in conjunction with the evaluation matrix to determine the data collection methods. The quantitative indicators in the logical framework will supplement the qualitative themes and insights, including equity considerations, collected through activities such as focus groups, interviews, survey and review of documents. It maps onto the Theory of Change (ToC) diagrams, i.e. the reader can refer to the ToC diagrams from top left to bottom right when reading the log frame. The aim has been to craft at least one quantitative indicator for each activity, output and early outcome and selected critical assumptions. The quantitative indicators in the logical framework will supplement the qualitative themes and insights collected through activities such as focus groups, interviews, survey and review of documents.

The focus of this evaluation is on the design and early implementation of the programme, and there are specific evaluation questions to be answered in relation to these. Therefore, in rationalizing the data collection methods to be commensurate with the evaluation scope and resourcing, the indicators at the level of activities and outputs have taken priority, and to some extent, the outcomes. The assumptions up to the level of early outcomes have also been prioritised since they are key to understanding the design and implementation of the programme. Therefore, not all of the results chain elements find expression in the log frame; however, the current proposed log frame nevertheless proposes the measurement of 59 results chain elements, using one or more indicators each.

3.3.2 Data Collection Plan

Given our understanding of the programme as expressed in the programme review and theory of change, the evaluation questions, and the logical framework, the following data collection methods will be used:

- (1) Focus groups (at both national and school case study levels);
- (2) Interviews (at both national and school case study levels);
- (3) Online surveys; and
- (4) Data and Document review

School case study data collection will be conducted face to face. Most of the other methods will be virtual, except where there is an opportunity to interview some of the stakeholder organisations' representatives in person in an efficient way.

In arriving at these data collection methods, the evaluation team weighed up (1) sufficiency to answer the evaluation questions; (2) their feasibility in terms of the project's resourcing; (3) the potential for inclusive/ equitable representation; and (4) the burden that they place on stakeholders to participate in sessions and/or compile information from their records. We have tried to limit the number of stakeholders who are requested to participate in more than one way (e.g. both an interview and a survey) and where we do request this, to do so only for a smaller sample of respondents.

Table 4 below presents the data collection methods, distinguishing the programme-wide data collection methods from those that will be implemented at the case study schools.

Table 4: Data collection methods

Stakeholder	Population	Method	Nr of sessions	Participants per session	Total nr of participants
UNICEF	1	Interviews*	1	1	1
DBE Provincial	3	Interviews*	3	1	3 to 6
NECT	1	Interviews*	1	1	1
Implementing partners leads	4	Interviews	4	1 to 2	4 to 8
Task Teams	36	Online Focus Group	4	At least 3 per TT	At least 12
Principals & Deputies (SMT Members)	975	Survey	1	All of those who we have contact details	Up to 975
Circuit Managers	277	Online Focus Group	1	6 to 16	6 to 16
Subject Advisors	104	Online Focus Group	1	6 to 16	6 to 16
Case study methodology (7 case study schools)					
Parents/caregivers	65,000	Focus Group	7	3 to 5 per school	35 to 56
School Governing Bodies Members (parents/caregivers)	3,250	Focus Group	7	2 to 3 per school	14 to 21
Teachers	4,600	Interviews	7	2	14
Total nr of sessions			38		

* To leverage efficiencies and to encourage appreciative and critical inquiry, the team suggests clustering of interviews from the same stakeholder group. The team will be attentive to relational fit in those instances where more than one person participates in an interview.

In the table below, the methods are shown again, grouped by method.

Table 5: Summary of data collection methods

Method	Target group	Total nr of sessions
Focus groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> School Governing Bodies members (in person) x 7 Parents/Caregivers (in person) x 7 Task Teams (virtual) x 4 Circuit Managers (virtual) x1 Subject Advisors (virtual) x1 	20
Interviews	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF (virtual) x 1 NECT (virtual) x 1 DBE Provincial officials (virtual) x 3 Implementing Partner leads (virtual) x4 Teachers (in person) x 7 	16
Electronic Survey	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> SMT 	1
Total nr of sessions		37

As the tables above show, the team has set some minimum numbers for targeted participants where it is hard to predict or control exactly how many will participate. This means that there is a minimum and maximum possible number of participants, as follows:

Altogether, a minimum of 96 and maximum of 175 qualitative respondents are planned. For the online survey, the aim is to receive responses from at least 15% of the 975 participants, i.e. 146 responses; however, up to 100% of the population may respond (i.e. 975 maximum). Combining the anticipated qualitative and quantitative respondents, this means **that a minimum of 242 respondents and a maximum of 1150 respondents will participate in the primary data collection.**

3.3.3 Data and Document review

Since the commencement of the evaluation, a large volume of data and documentation has already been reviewed. Further outstanding data and documents that were flagged in the first version of the Inception Report have been availed to a large extent. NECT has been providing further data as discussed in fortnightly progress meetings with the evaluation team. A selection of the school baseline dataset was provided in June and a fuller version will be shared by PSA in August. Lists of participating schools were provided by NECT and after some correspondence, were adequate to use for sampling case study schools. The full list of documents received to date is provided in the Annexes and will be updated as new documents are received.

This, combined with the other activities in the inception phase, has enabled the team to gain the necessary understanding about the programme, how it has been designed, and implementation to date as well as planned.

Going forward, further data and document review will be done to support the evaluation findings. An additional set of data will be requested to enable this – the monitoring data that implementing partners are required to generate as per their Service Level Agreements. This monitoring data was requested from the implementing partners in late June and some amendments were made in correspondence with them. **However, most of this data has not yet been provided and will still need to be shared over the coming months.**

Table 6: Required monitoring data

Leadership and Management PSA	Assessment for Learning TUT	Recovery Curriculum UKZN	Reading Recovery NECT
Completed training activities	Registration forms	Monitoring & Evaluation Report	Monitoring Data
Coaching registers Attendance	Participants Evaluation forms	District monitoring reports	Distribution report
Workshop registers Attendance	Attendance registers	Participant Evaluations	
SGB registers	Portfolio completion	Attendance registers	
	Result of endline assessment		
	LMS system reports		

	Completed Training activities		
	Assessment of subject advisors' knowledge and skills for District monitoring reports		
	Quarterly reports		

Implementing partners are requested to review this section of the Inception Report and confirm whether they can indeed provide the data sources to the evaluation team, and whether they will contain the anticipated data. Where possible, it would be useful to have the monitoring data disaggregated, even if only for gender. The specific quantitative indicators which the team anticipates drawing from these sources, are noted in the logical framework and need to be scrutinised and confirmed. Implementing partners should also identify any other data sources available to answer the evaluation questions.

3.4 Sources and Sampling

For the qualitative engagements, the sample of respondents below is proposed based on PDG’s current understanding of the programme. The goal is to do purposive sampling, to ensure that the interviews and focus groups provide a comprehensive set of stakeholder perspectives in relation to the key evaluation questions. It is expected that the ESC will engage with what is proposed and recommend changes based on the ESC’s knowledge of the programme.

The following criteria were applied in sampling the schools:

- A selection of 2 schools in LP and EC as well as 3 schools in KZN
- At least 2 districts represented across the 2 or 3 schools per province
- The distance between the sampled schools in each province is a maximum of 4 hours drive, to maximise the time available at schools.
- Final sample to include spread of quintiles and 2 special schools across all provinces.

A detailed account of how the sample was arrived at is provided as an Annexure.

In setting up the school-based fieldwork, NECT will be requested to schedule the school data collection through the principals, and to initiate contact with them at the start of July i.e. a month before the intended visits. In the first contact, they will be explicitly asked whether they are willing to participate. If a school does not wish to participate, the sample does include one “backup school” for each sampled school. This school will then be contacted.

Further, the NECT will be requested to allow for a representative gender balance of respondents in so far as possible. For instance, when scheduling teacher interviews, they should seek to arrange interviews with a balance of male and female teachers who have participated in the interventions. A note should be made in cases where a significant gender imbalance was unavoidable due to the gender ratio of the participants based on what the *as is* involvement and representation has been.

3.5 Analytical approaches

The evaluation matrix describes in detail what data will be analysed in order to answer each evaluation question. For judging implementation (resourcing, activities, outputs), the overall

method will be process tracing against the theory of change (including the detailed workstream theories of change). The planned activities will be compared against those that occurred. In relation to outcomes, process tracing will also be employed, along with a noting of unintended or unanticipated outcomes.

The data obtained during the inception phase (interviews, programme documents, meeting minutes, meeting agendas, etc.) and collected during the fieldwork phase will be triangulated using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software package that helps researchers organize, analyse and find insights in unstructured or qualitative data like interviews and open-ended survey responses. Additional data analysis methods will be employed, such as the use of Excel for analysing survey results.

3.5.1 Qualitative data analysis

Factual data will be triangulated across sources as necessary, while the main analytical approach will be thematic analysis. The thematic analysis process aims to pick up on common themes, recurring phrases as well as contrasting points. The evaluation team will create predetermined codes informed by the evaluation questions, sub-questions, and log frame. The first cycle of thematic coding will be done based on these predetermined codes, with sub-codes added as necessary. While coding to predetermined codes, they will identify emerging codes that were not included in the predetermined set of codes but seem to be of interest. In the second cycle of coding, the evaluation team will code the entire dataset again, this time focusing on the most significant of the emerging codes.

Regarding the treatment of personal identifying information, the qualitative data obtained during the inception phase and collected during the fieldwork phase (interviews, attendance registers, meeting minutes, etc.) will include personal information such as names of participants, however the names of participants will not be quoted by name in the report. During primary data collection, no names will be captured for the school-based respondents as this is not necessary. However, interview participants from the programme management, oversight structures and implementation partner organizations will be purposively selected based on the role that they play in the programme. Their names are thus recorded to examine whether the appropriate role players were interviewed and/ or participated in focus groups and to understand their comments within the context of the role that they play. Secondary data such as attendance registers from programme activities, progress reports, and lists of participating schools and individuals will also be treated confidentially and analysis presented in aggregate form so as not to render any individuals identifiable in the report.

3.5.2 Quantitative data analysis

Three main types of quantitative data will be analysed: the survey results; programme monitoring data; and financial data. The quantitative data is important for complementing and triangulating the data collected from the case studies. The analysis of the quantitative data will illustrate how the programme is performing in implementing the activities of the programme and to some extent, the attainment of the programme outcomes.

The quantitative data will be analysed descriptively using Microsoft Excel, in relation to the evaluation questions, as per the notes in the logical framework.

This will include quantifying the extent of implementation wherever possible. For instance, the logframe makes provision for quantifying the number of schools that received books as a percentage of selected schools, and assessing the geographic reach of training interventions. An alignment exercise was done to ensure that the indicators developed are related to the evaluation questions. Refer to the logical framework for the full anticipated set of indicators.

3.5.3 Equity Analysis

The proposed approach is to apply a set of equity-focused analytical criteria, including considerations such as gender, human rights (access, race, religious beliefs, physical attributes), social inclusion (income, physical attributes, geographical location) and the environment. The evaluation findings will be appraised using a rating scale with the following 4 levels:

1. Equity-blind: Ignoring the relevance of equity dimensions; failure to recognise the existing differences in gender, human rights-related attributes or that related to aspects of social inclusion and the environment.
2. Equity-neutral: There is no apparent association to the inclusion or exclusion of gender, human rights, social inclusion and environment dimensions.
3. Equity-sensitive: There is evidence of equity dimensions having been considered in the Programme planning and design to implementation.
4. Equity-positive: The focus is on Programme outcomes with a clear focus on the inclusion of equity dimensions that seed (and may realise) transformative change.

The equity-focused criteria are aligned to the programme theory of change and logical framework. The criteria are an effort to provide clear points of reference in relation to the extent to which equity considerations have been included in the design and implementation of the REALS SA Programme. A full analytical framework is provided as an annexure.

3.5.4 Triangulation

Using the preliminary findings generated by the respective analyses, a process of triangulating these findings will follow in broad sequence to the overarching evaluation questions. Triangulation will be used to deepen, enrich, cross-verify and contrast findings from the respective data sources. In particular, the data collected from district, provincial and national stakeholders will be compared with that collected in the case studies, to ensure that findings are representative while using case studies as illustrative examples. This process will help to ensure that the assessment robustly substantiates its key findings in the report, presenting the various data sources in an integrated fashion in relation to questions and the theory of change which has guided the evaluation.

3.6 Evaluability Assessment, Risks and Limitations

3.6.1 Evaluability Assessment

An evaluability assessment is a quality assurance tool for good programme design. It enables early adjustments and corrections to programme design and implementation as needed.

According to UNICEF, the programme cycle allows for multiple options for undertaking evaluability assessment. This evaluability assessment considers this programme to be at early programme implementation with focus on the Theory of Change and Data availability.

Having considered evaluability both in principle and in practice, and using the UNICEF check list approach, below is the evaluability assessment.

Table 7: Evaluability Assessment of REALS SA

Key evaluability questions	Assessment and recommendation
Has sufficient time passed to conduct a design and implementation evaluation?	<p>Enough time has passed to look at the design aspects of the programme. In addition, the evaluation will be able to look at early implementation of the programme.</p> <p>The evaluation team plans to commence with fieldwork in August/September. Considerable implementation, monitoring and reporting is expected to happen before that date. It is understood that by the time the evaluation team undertakes fieldwork, all of the four workstreams would have reached school level, however they might be at different points of implementation and change.</p>
Have clear realistic and specific objectives and results been defined in the programmes plan?	<p>Yes. The Description of Action provides details on what the objectives and expected results will be. There are also targets set for each of the outputs.</p> <p>The cross-cutting issues of gender, inclusivity and sustainability have been articulated.</p> <p>Beneficiaries have been identified.</p> <p>Considerable work has been done which can inform a theory of change and the intervention logic appears coherent from our initial review. The theory of change has been workshoped and has confirmed that the logical framework that exists is aligned with stakeholder’s understanding of the programme and has further mapped out the causal links between the planned activities, outputs, outcomes and impact.</p>
Is a detailed implementation plan available?	<p>Yes. The plan has been received for 2022 only, but NECT indicates that a 2021 plan exists and will be shared.</p>
Does the plan have an operational management, monitoring and information system to support monitoring and reporting? (Practice)	<p>Partly. Some foundational elements have been included in the Description of Action, but appear not to have not been worked out in practice. The following is also known:</p> <p>Firstly, there is no single comprehensive M&E framework. NECT has been working on a more detailed log frame, but this is in draft form and its status, and the extent to which it reflects the views of stakeholders beyond NECT, are unclear. Each of the implementation partners outlines their M&E responsibilities and outputs in their respective Service Level Agreements.</p> <p>Secondly, the original log frame identifies the means of verification for outputs as listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF Reports • School records • District monitoring reports • Assessment of subject advisors’ knowledge • Provincial DBE Monitoring Report • Project Reports <p>Some of these have been shared while some types of reports may only start to emerge as implementation progresses over the coming months. The evaluation team has identified additional data to be requested from implementing partners.</p>
Are key partners identified to form part of the evaluation available and willing to participate in the evaluation? (Practice)	<p>Yes. In terms of evaluation management and support for the evaluation exercise, it is quite clear from the composition and responsiveness of the Evaluation Steering Committee that there is adequate buy-in.</p> <p>There is less clarity on the availability and willingness of the target groups at school and community level (e.g. teachers, parents) to participate in the evaluation.</p>

	However, it is reported that the recently completed advocacy sessions were positively received by stakeholders in the provinces. This is a positive indication.
What are the availability and reliability of disaggregated data needed to answer the evaluation questions? (Practice)	<p>The necessary data and documents have been availed to a large extent. NECT has committed to providing further data as discussed in weekly progress meetings with the evaluation team. School lists for all three provinces have been shared, however there are varying levels of detail in each provincial list. The evaluation team has requested more complete versions of the lists, inclusive of contact details of individual participants, and is awaiting receipt.</p> <p>There are indicators already developed in a log frame but it does not appear that data has been reported against these in any systematic fashion to date. Aside from high level progress reports, performance information is not available yet. It is anticipated that some of the monitoring data and documentation to be shared by implementing partners in the coming months will address some of these indicators.</p> <p>Outcome baseline data is limited, but this is not central to the evaluability of a design and implementation evaluation. It is nevertheless important for stakeholders to understand the implications of this for making evaluative judgements on effectiveness, value for money, and sustainability.</p>

Summary of Evaluability Assessment

Following a review of the documents and progress made on the programme, the assessment is that the programme is evaluable. The evaluation can be evaluated strongly on its design as well as early implementation aspects, and to a lesser extent on outcomes. Implementation is still at early stages; however, based on some of the introductory interviews, it is our understanding that by the time the evaluation team conducts the field work/data collection, all the workstreams would have reached school-based stakeholders. However, some of the intended changes (i.e. outcomes) will not yet have had time to emerge at school level. Accordingly, some of the implementation and outcome related evaluation questions, especially at school level, might only be answered to a limited extent due to the timing of implementation. The evaluation team is confident that the final list of evaluation questions can be answered making use of mixed methods, pending the sharing of some of the data and documentation as noted above.

The evaluation can proceed and yield valuable findings, as long as there is a shared understanding that the evaluation will trace the intended causal processes as far as possible in light of implementation progress.

3.6.2 Evaluation Risks and Limitations

With information flowing in from the documentation and data that have been reviewed, frequent engagements with the ESC and relevant REALS SA stakeholders, attendance of meetings and other relevant sources, the evaluation team has been able to identify what may pose a risk to the evaluation process and therefore potentially affect the evaluation plan.

Delays in implementation. The main limitation that has been identified is that of implementation progress of the REALS SA programme. Programme implementation is currently behind schedule. The evaluation team has established that although all workstreams will be well underway by September, not all planned components of the intervention will have reached schools by then. Some programme components will only be evaluable in terms of design, not implementation, if the data collection goes ahead as planned in September. This matter appears to affect about a third of the planned work across the programme. The

evaluation can fulfil its TOR if implemented as per the plan in this Inception Report; if it goes ahead in September as planned, then implementation delays will be transparently noted in the evaluation report, with a discussion of their implications for the representivity and comprehensiveness of the evaluation findings.

However, the ESC may prefer a change in scope and resourcing to postpone the evaluation by several months so that the programme's implementation can be evaluated more comprehensively. A more detailed assessment of what can be evaluated by September, with trade-offs and options for consideration, will be submitted to the Steering Committee within the coming week.

Resourcing. The evaluation has used considerably more of its resources than originally anticipated by the time of approving the inception report. The main reasons for this include:

- The complexity of the programme was somewhat underestimated at the time of developing the evaluation resource plan. The four workstreams each have a distinct rationale and have required four distinct theories of change and sets of indicators. Going forward, this will continue to require more resourcing than was originally anticipated: sufficient data will need to be collected to judge each workstream distinctly; and the evaluation analysis and report will also have to answer the evaluation questions in relation to each workstream as well as at programme level.
- There has also been more than the anticipated volume of correspondence required to obtain programme data, and this is anticipated to continue since much implementation monitoring data remains to be shared.
- The decision to apply for ethical clearance was made with the understanding that minimal additional work would be required, but the inputs of the Ethical Review Board has in fact required considerable work to integrate and the ethical protocols arrived at will require more time and resources to implement especially during fieldwork. The evaluation team previously committed to keeping the ESC apprised of challenges in this regard and will soon be submitting a request to the ESC to consider options in light of these developments.
- A longer period of consultation, and more consultation, on the planned evaluation has put further pressure on resources.

Communication and response times. Collaboration between REALS SA and evaluation team stakeholders has so far been positive. There have been a few small instances of miscommunication – around next steps after meetings; scheduling and availability; and emails missed or not responded to (both by the evaluation team who missed some resources that had been shared, and by some REALS SA stakeholders). While these have not been debilitating, it was noted that the evaluation can be implemented more smoothly if communication is firmed up. As a result, a member of the evaluation team and the REALS SA project manager have instituted bi-weekly catch-up meetings. The team also endeavours to keep email correspondence to a critical minimum but request that emails be responded to

within two working days by those addressed in the email. The success of the upcoming fieldwork phase will be greatly dependent on good communication and responsiveness between stakeholders.

Engagement of education officials. In relation to the above-mentioned, education officials (DBE and PEDs) have been difficult to get in contact with for various reasons, which has so far slightly impacted the information that the evaluation team has access to as well as the number of scheduled engagements in total for the evaluation process. DBE and PED officials are crucial stakeholders to engage with, as frequently as need be, in their capacity as the champion government departments for this programme. Limited participation from their side could result in low response rates on the survey, poor showing in qualitative data collection sessions, and ultimately, their perspective not being captured throughout the evaluation process and in the final reports, impacting on the upscaling of the programme and other decision-making that the evaluation may be influencing. In light of this, the evaluation team has discussed and agreed with the ESC and relevant education officials that cooperation is key and strategies such as having education officials convened by DBE (rather than the evaluation team) will be deployed. This remains a risk and needs to be closely monitored.

.

3.7 Ethics and evaluation principles

The evaluation team has reviewed the UNICEF Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards and Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children as informants to our planning of the evaluation. Below are our notes on how the ethical principles will be applied in the evaluation. This version of the Inception Report incorporates edits in line with the feedback of the Ethical Review Board and is anticipated to result in ethical approval. Once this has been obtained it will be annexed as Annexure 5.15.

Please note that all team members have also signed the 2020 Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation pledge, and this is attached as an annexure to Inception Report Version B.

Description		Implications for this evaluation
INTEGRITY		
Alignment with ethical principles	Ensure that the conduct and behaviour of the evaluator is in accordance with ethical values and professional standards.	PDG in accordance with UNEG principles will ensure from the planning phase that the UNEG principles have been read and understood for those who conduct evaluation section and honestly complete annexure 5.9 (checklist of ethical issues for those who conduct evaluations to consider during each evaluation).
Communication	Clients and key stakeholders should be informed about all aspects of the evaluation, including findings, methodology, constraints, and any changes that could arise. In addition, being honest when estimating the amount of work, money, and actual effort that will be required.	In the inception phase, a detailed work plan has been included to highlight and share prospective deliverables and milestones that the evaluation will undertake. In addition, PDG is in continuous engagement with the programme manager regarding project timelines and any additional support or information that is to be required to undertake the evaluation successfully.
Professional development	Maintain a continuous program of professional development and exchange in order to improve qualification and knowledge in order to conduct competent and ethical evaluations.	PDG’s strategy includes an extensive development focus on its employees by contributing 1% of the organisation’s profits towards learning and development. This ensures that the project team mainly consists of personnel with evaluation and monitoring expertise, whilst making room to further develop skills in said areas. Team members are afforded the chance to attempt increasingly advanced evaluation tasks with due supervision and feedback. Team reflection opportunities are built into the project plan at key milestones.

Competency	Conduct evaluations only within the scope of established competencies. Evaluators must be open and honest about their methodological or technical expertise.	The methodological approach to this evaluation has been addressed in the proposal and in the Inception Report. In addition, evaluators will not make claims that aren't supported by evidence. Approval from stakeholders on the validity of the approach ensures transparency and manages expectations.
Avoid conflicts of interest	Conflicts of interest, including those relating to potential future developments, should be avoided as much as possible. However, when they do emerge or become obvious, they must be addressed and dealt with honestly.	PDG has not identified any conflict of interest as the organisation is independent from the evaluand. In particular, the inception phase established that pre-existing interaction between UNICEF staff and the evaluation team members in other environments is limited enough not to be a cause for concern.
ACCOUNTABILITY		
Evaluative judgments	Demonstrate that the evaluation is done in a thorough, fair, and balanced manner in the inception and evaluation reports, and that any findings made are based on sound and comprehensive evidence that can be validated.	The evaluability assessment above provides a transparent assessment of the quality of evidence and notes the implications for limitations to the credibility of the evaluative judgements. Moreover, the evaluation will continue to present the evidence and reflect explicitly on the strength of evidence on which judgements are based. To promote a fair and balanced judgment, the evaluation steering committee has representatives of all the main stakeholder entities; and most stakeholder groupings including those based at schools will be represented among the data collection participants. Further, stakeholders will have the opportunity to validate our initial findings, and source documents and primary data will be made available to the client at the end of the project in anonymised form.
Resources	Manage the evaluation team's resources (human, financial, and physical) in a cost-effective and time-efficient manner.	The team leader and other senior team members have experience in project management and PDG has various tools to assist in careful tracking of both financial and other resources used to help the project manager use resources efficiently.
Transparency	Communicate with all stakeholders on all aspects of the evaluation process, including limitations, in an open and transparent manner. This includes bringing up ethical concerns for debate and/or action as soon as possible, as well as communicating how ethical considerations are addressed in evaluation reports and other deliverables.	During the inception phase the steering committee designated a representative from NECT as well as a representative from UNICEF that the evaluation team regularly communicates with. This allows for continuous engagement, creating transparency, clarity and prompt feedback across various aspects of the project. Moreover, the project management arrangements also offer the ability to escalate matters to the evaluation steering committee whenever necessary. Lastly, the Inception Report as well as the evaluation report outline provide for explicit discussion of limitations and ethical considerations.

Data management	Follow the requirements for appropriate data management as recommended by the commissioning entity.	The evaluation contract includes a confidentiality clause which will be upheld. In addition, PDG has read and committed to UNICEF’s Information Disclosure policy. See the section on Data storage and Security for practical arrangements that are in place in the evaluation.
Adherence	Maintain rigorous commitment to all ethical principles and ensure that they are always followed during the evaluation process.	From the inception phase, this evaluation has included a signed pledge on evaluation conduct signed by all team members. For data collection, protocols have been developed and internal training will be conducted on how to follow them, with a mechanism in place to escalate ethical matters encountered during data collection. The fieldwork report will report on the extent to which these were upheld and also confirm arrangements in relation to data storage and handling that have been put in place for the data analysis phase. The final report will report back comprehensively on how ethical arrangements were followed through.
RESPECT		
Inform	Ensure that potential participants in the evaluation understand why they are being consulted, what the desired results are, and that they have enough and acceptable information to give informed permission. This includes expressly stating that they can skip questions or withdraw consent at any point during the evaluation process without risk of being penalized.	The data collection instruments include informed consent statements which spell out participants’ rights, risks and benefits, and the data collection team will discuss these with participants at the start of each interview or focus group. Participants in virtual focus groups or interviews will be asked to provide their formal consent in writing and will be invited to leave the session if they are uncomfortable with any aspect of the informed consent statement.
Confidentiality	Respect participants’ right to provide sensitive information and make sure they understand the scope and limits of confidentiality. In addition, to protect individuals from reprisal, evaluators must verify that sensitive data cannot be traced back to its source.	The evaluators will give the general assurance that quotes, and primary data will be reported on in a way that anonymises the interviews and focus group participants. The remainder of the inception phase will be used to agree with the steering committee on how to treat instances where a finding is important to report on, but it is not possible to quote the stakeholder confidentially. It is anticipated that information will not be treated confidentially if it is pertaining to the performance of the programme, rather than the views or performance of individuals – for instance, the full report may discuss the performance of specific schools or districts by name. The evaluators are willing to remove sensitive details from the summarised version which is circulated to a wider audience. The informed consent statement will make it clear to what extent the responses will be treated confidentially.
Inclusion and non-discrimination	Ensure that all participants receive equal participation and treatment, as well as the opportunity to express their opinions. Respect cultural variations, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal contact, gender roles,	The evaluators will ensure that the spread of participants is inclusive and treated fairly by having both genders and differently abled persons represented whenever possible, acknowledging the lack of online / digital ability of participants. For example, being considerate of socio-economic dynamics of schools and parents,

	ability, age, and ethnicity, and be aware of the potential implications of these differences when conducting and reporting evaluations	removing financial barriers to participation (late afternoon sessions to accommodate working parents; local venues rather than venues requiring transport). The team will accommodate language barriers by involving team members (we have isiZulu and isiXhosa speakers in the team) and where necessary, additional fieldworkers who speak the local language. In this evaluation we do not anticipate working directly with children but have reviewed UNEG guidance policy on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations and will apply it if the data collection plan changes to involve children.
Show empathy	Empathize with all stakeholders and collaborate with them, treating evaluation participants, evaluators, and commissioners with respect for their professional knowledge and personal dignity	The evaluators and fieldworkers will respect time commitments and be flexible and willing to adapt the plan to accommodate stakeholders' needs, especially for school-based stakeholders. The team will affirm the expertise of the respondents in the matter at hand as part of the informed consent form prior to conducting interviews.
BENEFICENCE		
Clear benefits	Position the evaluation as much as possible as an intervention aimed at realising human rights, gender equality, and achieving the SDGs, and be clear about the implications of this approach. To maximize possible advantages to the evaluation and those involved in it, push for and fully execute participatory and empowerment methodologies, as well as other types of stakeholder consultation.	This will be ensured by articulating the project description to reflect how it is intended to contribute to these matters; and to derive applicable analytical frameworks from the available guidance, to become as the transparent basis on which the project's contribution to these matters will be evaluated. In designing the data collection and stakeholder engagements, the team will seek to design the interactions so that they do not merely extract information but also to learn from the methods being applied (e.g. theory of change methodology), and to facilitate constructive reflection among the stakeholders involved.
Addressing power imbalances	Ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard, even if data collection is done remotely. Recognise potential power imbalances in the evaluation procedures used, report on them, and try to remedy or reduce them.	Some of the known power imbalances that we will face are those between national, provincial, district and school-based stakeholders; and power imbalances between school staff and parents / community members (especially where their socio-economic and education levels differ drastically). Aside from ensuring that we collect data from representatives of all these stakeholders in distinct groupings, we will remain sensitive to how these manifest in the field and respectfully call these tensions out and propose means of mitigating them wherever possible.
Do no harm	Ensure that continuing risk assessments, which go beyond what participants have consented to, clarify and minimise potential and actual effects. This risk assessment must be ongoing, and no evaluations should be conducted if	No harms are anticipated other than those already addressed above. The team will have daily debriefing sessions during fieldwork to reflect on any unanticipated harms or risks of such, and document any significant concerns, with the possibility of escalation to the steering committee if needed.

	mitigation (for example, through the adoption of alternative approaches) is not possible and will result in harm ¹⁶ .	
--	--	--

¹⁶ Examples of harm include discomfort, embarrassment, intrusion, devaluation of worth, unmet expectations, stigmatisation, physical injury, distress and trauma

4 Workplan

4.1 Phases

This workplan lays out the different phases of the evaluation as well as the different activities to be undertaken as part of each phase. The plan, along with the proposed timeframes, is then summarised in an updated calendar of work.

4.1.1 Inception phase

An inception meeting was held on the 24th of January 2022 with the client team, where an understanding of the programme was agreed upon, and a way forward for the evaluation discussed. Following from that meeting, the evaluation and client teams agreed on a schedule of deliverables and meetings, as well as allowing the evaluation team to attend workstream meetings first-hand. The deadline for Inception Report Version A was subsequently extended from 17 February to 28 February to allow sufficient time for the team to engage with documentation which was being shared.

The evaluation team then proceeded to conduct a desktop review of all relevant REALS-SA programme documentation to further supplement their understanding of the programme. Furthermore, stakeholders from UNICEF, DBE and NECT were engaged with as part of the introductory and review phase of the evaluation. The information received from these consultations and reviews will be used by the evaluation team to begin preliminary mapping of the programme specific TOC as well as inform the monitoring data required from the implementing partner for analysis.

As part of the inception phase, the evaluation team was required to conduct an evaluability assessment. This has been conducted and is presented in more detail in section 3.6. Following from this assessment, an engagement was held with the REALS SA programme manager at NECT to discuss the availability of documents and data, as well as additional programme-specific information.

Informed by the abovementioned, Inception Report A was compiled, containing a detailed workplan, evaluability assessment and draft evaluation matrix. It was then submitted to the ESC on the 28th of February, with the prompt for stakeholders to engage with the draft programme ToC in preparation for the ToC workshop that was held on the 8th of March.

4.1.2 TOC Workshop and Review Phase

Having begun in the inception phase, the following milestone activity was the development and refinement of a programme-specific ToC. This was done through conducting desktop reviews of relevant documentation and data as and when it became available. A series of introductory interviews with Dr Andile Dube from UNICEF, Dr Stephen Taylor from the DBE and Mr Gaza Mbhalati from the NECT helped supplement information received from programme documentation, as well as provide updates on implementation progress. Finally, the evaluation team had the opportunity to attend the various TT meetings, as well as continue to meet bi-weekly with the project manager at NECT.

This process assisted the evaluation team with further identifying the programme design strengths, weaknesses, critical assumptions and risks. Furthermore, it highlighted the need for

various ToCs speaking to each sub-programme as opposed to one ToC encompassing all sub-programmes at once as expanded on in section 2.4. A workshop with the ESC and REALS SA stakeholders was then held on the 8th of March, which was based on the four draft sub-programme specific logic models compiled by the evaluation team, as well as the overview ToC giving a high-level summary of the complex programme.

The workshop was an opportunity for the evaluation team to present all 5 ToCs to the ESC, and for the ESC to raise any concerns or additional comments they had in relation to them. This then informed the editing of the ToCs, which was followed by final one-on-one validation sessions with members of each sub-programme's technical team. The evaluation team was able to edit all ToCs accordingly and in time for the presentation of inception version A to the ESC on the 24th of March, which was largely well received. The presentation session was however poorly attended by DBE officials, which necessitated an additional presentation and ToC validation session specially for them on the 20th of April. Feedback received from the ESC and REALS SA stakeholders on Inception Report version A and the ToCs better informed the structure and information to be emphasised in version B.

4.1.3 Evaluation Planning phase

Following from the ToC and review phase, the evaluation is now in the middle of the evaluation Planning phase. Given the additional information received from programme stakeholders and evaluation sessions to date, the evaluation team has been able to develop data collection instruments, and further supplement the evaluation plan going forward. Furthermore, version B of the Inception Report contains a preliminary data collection and fieldwork plan, to be reviewed and commented on as part of the review of Inception Report version B.

The first submission of Inception Report B includes the near-final evaluation plan including the TOC, programme description, evaluation design, sampling (especially for the case studies), fieldwork plan and instruments. This will be presented to the ESC (and others whom they may invite as they see fit), providing the opportunity for them to input on the planning and propose amendments to the instruments before the instruments are used in the field.

Once inputs have been received, Inception Report B will be revised and finalised.

4.1.4 Fieldwork phase

4.1.4.1 Desktop review of monitoring data

Once the final evaluation plan has been submitted and approved, as the final sets of requested monitoring data and documents are submitted, the evaluation team will be in a position to commence analysis of the monitoring data generated by the implementing partners, conducting a **desktop review of the data** as described in the earlier Analytical approaches section.

4.1.4.2 Primary data collection

As discussed earlier, primary data collection sessions will consist of focus groups, interviews, and survey. Each case study school will be visited physically with in-person sessions hosted with school stakeholders. Other sessions will be conducted at the programme level. This section provides a bit more detail on these methods.

Fieldwork for the **case studies** will be undertaken in each of the intervention provinces, Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape. Seven schools will be chosen for the case studies, with sampling to be finalized once all necessary data has been received, at the latest by the end of June. Engagements for interviews with teachers and focus groups with parents & SGB members will be done in person at the chosen schools with COVID-19 regulations observed. The evaluation team will visit each school over two consecutive days, thus spending 15 days on school visits at a total of 7 schools in Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape.

- **Focus groups** will be used to elicit answers from Circuit Managers (online); Subject Advisors (online); and at case study schools, with Parents/Caregivers; and SGB members. In addition, to cover all the relevant areas of the evaluation scope, there will be a focus group for each Workstream (Task Team) (online). Focus groups will be an hour and a half each.
- **Semi-structured interviews** will be held with teachers for the case studies and with NECT, DBE provincial officials and implementing partner leads for the overall method. The interviews with teachers will be conducted in person.
- **One survey**, targeted at SMT members, will be conducted. The survey will be sent to all the SMT members in the three provinces.

4.1.4.3 Time frames, scheduling and access

We anticipate the data collection will start on 1 August 2022 and end on 26 August 2022. The fieldwork report will be submitted in early September.

A crucial prerequisite to starting and ending the data collection on schedule is the support of NECT in preparation. Once the evaluation team is provided with the names and contact details for the virtual engagements, they can schedule these independently, reaching out to NECT if they encounter challenges. Given the sensitive nature of the interviews, and that PDG has no direct contact details to the parents, SMTs, SGBs, and subject advisors **it is imperative that school visits are facilitated by NECT**. The list of schools provided by NECT for all three provinces have been shared with the evaluation team, however some lists are missing crucial contact information. Once the sample has been drawn, from the list of participating schools in the latter provinces a list of all the prospective schools will be sent to NECT in order that they:

- verify and update contact details of the respondents.
- inform sampled schools and parents about the project, fieldwork timeframe, what is expected of the school and ensure general cooperation from the SGBs, teachers and confirm availability of the learners' parents for the specific dates of the school visits.

This should be done by NECT (working with the PEDs as necessary) in August, to ensure readiness for the fieldwork commencing in September. For the sample schools, a “backup school” has been sampled for each case study and this will be used if (1) the school explicitly declines to participate, or (2) NECT encounters significant challenges in working with them to schedule the visit. The team will check in with NECT weekly to discuss any challenges and mitigations in scheduling, and to start booking travel as the visits get confirmed. Careful planning and scheduling are critical here, given the inability to revisit schools (see below).

As specified on the schedule, the project timeframe doesn't allow for much flexibility and re-visits; as such NECT programme manager is requested to impress on the schools and

respondents, especially those in areas that are located in hard-to-reach areas, to ensure that they avail themselves at the agreed upon date and time.

At fieldwork training, the fieldwork team will be taken through the protocols (protection protocol, data collection session protocol and COVID-19 protocol) to follow throughout the fieldwork, which are discussed in more detail further below. This will include discussion on the ethical principles and how they may apply practically in this evaluation's case. Interviews will be led by the evaluation team with support from the education specialist on some high-profile interviews.

A week prior to each school visit, and again the day prior to each fieldwork day, the fieldwork supervisor will contact the participants and remind them of the appointment and confirm availability. Virtual engagements may be rescheduled if necessary. However, if school-based stakeholders are not available, the NECT programme manager is to be notified and a contingency plan implemented, which may consist of (1) conducting whatever sessions are still possible at the school and planning further telephonic/virtual engagements at a later stage; or (2) dropping the school and having fewer case studies. Given resource constraints, it will not be possible to return to the school at a later stage and selecting and organizing fieldwork at an alternative nearby school is unlikely to be feasible.

4.1.4.4 *Scheduling and logistics*

Since the team members who will conduct the qualitative fieldwork are based in Cape Town and Johannesburg, they will need to travel to Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo. School visits, including focus groups with SGB members and parents and interviews with teachers will be held over a duration of 2 consecutive days at each of the sampled schools in EC, KZN and LP. Overall, the duration in which the evaluation team will spend time completing fieldwork in Limpopo and EC totals 4 days respectively, whilst in KZN it will be 6 days.

In terms of piloting of qualitative instruments, focus groups and interviews will follow an adaptive approach, with updating of the instruments as the team reflects on the first few sessions.

The online survey has been piloted. The ESC was invited to log into the draft online survey and complete it as if they are an SMT member. Only one set of inputs was received and those edits were incorporated into the survey. However, it has become clear that it will be necessary to pilot the survey again within the month before it launches, specifically inviting Implementation Partners to test it. These stakeholders know best how the programme components are known to the respondents, and will also need to confirm that the survey makes accurate assumptions about implementation progress, as this affects which SMT members will be able to respond to the questions regarding the different workstreams. As per the updated workplan, this is proposed for August.

Further, based on the nature of the evaluation, with samples being pulled from 2 schools in EC, Limpopo and 3 in KZN, with some engagements being conducted virtually and in person, the fieldwork will therefore be divided into four phases. The first three phases will cover the in-person fieldwork at the various schools followed by the fourth session which will move to focusing on virtual interviews and online survey administration. Furthermore, all phases of fieldwork will be conducted with supervisory support from all evaluation team members and

NECT, who will provide continuous guidance, and assist the team in troubleshooting any challenges that may emanate from the field, as well as altering the fieldwork strategy if necessary.

The online survey will be launched in late July, with reminders sent out during August leveraging engagements with the potential respondents as far as possible to encourage them to participate. The survey will close at the end of August, so that the datasets will be ready for the team to commence analysis shortly after the final qualitative data collection sessions are completed.

4.1.4.5 *Data storage and data security*

In terms of **data storage and data security**, PDG will assume responsibility for securing and verifying data that will be collected and compiled during fieldwork. PDG has strict data security and storage policies and procedures in place.

All work pertaining to this evaluation is conducted using PDG's Microsoft Office suite, which includes email via Microsoft Outlook for sending and receiving project information with evaluation steering committee, and storage and collaboration on documents using PDG's OneDrive. These applications can only be accessed by PDG's employees (14 persons) using their login credentials. All PDG devices are password protected.

As part of PDG's normal operational procedures, upon project closure, project files and documents are moved to an archive in a different OneDrive folder. In the case of this evaluation, the archive folder will be retained for three years or for a period that UNICEF may recommend.

Some other specific arrangements include:

Dr Mark Abrahams is not an employee of PDG and hence does not work on the PDG applications mentioned above. He has signed a commitment to apply similar practices on his personal devices and to destroy the project information shared with him upon conclusion of the project.

Paper consent forms will be scanned and the digital copies kept on PDG's secured OneDrive project folder, while the paper versions will be destroyed.

All audio recordings on mobile devices will be saved on PDG's secured OneDrive project folder, there after the copy on the mobile device will be deleted.

4.1.4.6 *COVID-19 considerations*

The fieldwork supervisor will ensure that all fieldworkers receive basic COVID-19 safety training prior to engaging in fieldwork which will include the following:

- the various modes of transmission of the virus;
- preventative measures that should be taken to adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols such as social distancing, wearing of masks in enclosed spaces;

- symptom monitoring through asking participants to sign and mark the attendance register, where they will be able to indicate if they have been experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms;
- management and referral of a fieldworker or participant if they are suspected to be COVID-19 positive

Further, the fieldwork team should have dedicated PPE such as sanitizers for disinfecting surfaces, envelope to store consent forms, or any other documentation, plastic bags to use for the disposal of any waste materials used during the fieldwork, box of tissues if required by participants as and when needed.

4.1.5 Analysis and Reporting phase

Once the information is consolidated and analysed using appropriate methods, the evaluation team will begin working on the reports. The evaluation team has proposed, and the ESC has accepted, the submission of **a single report covering all evaluation questions**, as opposed to the original TOR provision for two separate reports. This would mean that rather than having individual design and implementation reports, the evaluation team would combine and synthesise the key findings on the design questions into the design and implementation report.

The report will be a maximum of 40 – 60 pages excluding annexes. The report will inform the presentation of key findings to the client team, which will be followed by a workshop on the draft conclusions and recommendations of the report with key stakeholders. Once these recommendations are agreed upon, the evaluation team will make the necessary edits to the draft report in preparation for the submission of the final report.

4.1.6 Finalisation

Once the final report has been submitted, a final presentation will be delivered to the ESC and relevant stakeholders. Upon acceptance of the final report, data used in the evaluation will be handed over to respective custodians, and a closeout meeting held marking the end of the evaluation.

4.2 Team composition and responsibilities

The evaluation team roles and responsibilities are as per the table below.

Table 8: Team roles and responsibilities

Team Member	Role	Responsibilities
Mark Abrahams	Education Expert; Ethics officer	Programme review; evaluation design; education sector related data collection and evaluative judgements; quality assurance on key deliverables
Cara Hartley	Lead Evaluation Expert	Project management; client liaison; lead author of the evaluation report including evaluative judgements

Nazreen Kola	Co-evaluator and gender specialist	Content expert on gender and other mainstreaming; public sector and intergovernmental relations considerations; quality assurance on key deliverables
Ntina Reiersgord	Emerging evaluator	Evaluation design; data collection design; data collection; overseeing data analysis, triangulation and generation of findings, conclusions and recommendations
Anele Msomi	Emerging evaluator	Support to the evaluation lead on project management; contextual research and project description; in-depth document review; data collection; data analysis
Lelethu Bodlani	Intern	Fieldwork planning and implementation; financial analysis; support to the team across the evaluation project life cycle; data collection.

4.3 Quality assurance

A range of mechanisms are in place to ensure the quality of the evaluation and all outputs. Through the design of the composition of the evaluation team, the education specialist, gender specialist, and lead evaluator will have direct oversight over the project, as well as all deliverables before submission. This is to ensure that all expertise is applied as required to each main deliverable, enhancing the quality of the outputs. Furthermore, the review periods when deliverables are submitted to the ESC allow for them to give input on deliverables, which ensures that what is submitted is in line with the requirements and expectations of the client team.

The team also has scheduled regular meetings with the REALS SA Project Manager to stay up to date with the progress of the evaluation as well as the REALS SA programme implementation. There is also an open channel of communication between the evaluation team and M&E Specialist at UNICEF to avoid misunderstandings and ensure that what the evaluation team implements and is in line with expectations; and that where necessary, matters can be escalated to the ESC.

4.3.1 Fieldwork-specific quality assurance

As a means of quality control on the implementation of the qualitative data collection sessions, the fieldworkers will complete a document regularly at the end of their activities to capture practical challenges and solutions, learnings, and insights shared during the sessions. They will have regular check-ins with the evaluation team on progress and learnings. This method allows the evaluation team to use rapid feedback and troubleshoot problems throughout the fieldwork process to ensure protocols are followed effectively and instruments are as appropriate as possible, to collect high quality data.

To ensure the quality of data collected, the interview and focus group sessions will be recorded directly by the fieldworker on their mobile device and immediately transmitted to a central database. The sessions will be conducted as far as possible by two fieldworkers, with

one leading and one typing notes. After each session the initial set of notes will be checked against the recording and updated as necessary.

Lastly, piloting will be the primary means of ensuring the quality of the survey. A week after the survey launches, the team will do a first review of the responses collected so far and check for any data quality issues. To address any technical challenges, the landing page of the survey contains the contact details for a team member who can assist respondents in this regard.

4.4 Management and logistic support

In order for the evaluation team to adequately conduct the study, support from the client team will be imperative. Above all else, the evaluation requires continuous, close and active engagement by UNICEF, NECT, and DBE.

The calendar of work provides for regular ESC meetings, at which all three of these entities are represented. These have been helpful in ensuring that the programme stakeholders and the evaluation team are communicating consistently, identifying potential setbacks or opportunities for the evaluation as the study progresses. More importantly, the evaluation team anticipates this active engagement to mitigate difficulties such as access to necessary data and communicating with necessary evaluation participants.

To assist with ensuring that identified evaluation role players will be responsive to the evaluation team when contacted, it has been agreed that the ESC will sign an introductory letter stating who the team is and why they have been appointed by the REALS SA team. These letters will also then be adapted for the respective phases of the evaluation, depending on when the stakeholders and role players may potentially be contacted. They were particularly helpful in the inception phase and will continue to be of use for the upcoming fieldwork phase where the evaluation team will be seeking direct engagement with programme implementing partners and beneficiaries.

As discussed in earlier sections, it has been agreed that NECT will support in scheduling and communicating about the upcoming component of fieldwork to all stakeholders and will schedule the school visits. Once the schedule is confirmed, NECT is requested to provide all respondents' contact details allow for direct communication particularly on the scheduled day of engagement.

The following key steps are required in terms of management and logistic support for the coming few months:

Timeframe	Support required
23 May	ESC to circulate Inception Report Version B (this document) to all implementing partners for comment, especially noting the monitoring data requested

As soon as possible	NECT to provide all outstanding data in relation to programme schools and programme participants, to enable case study sampling
As soon as possible	ESC members to start sensitising programme stakeholders to the upcoming fieldwork (July 2022 onwards), e.g. in meetings between DBE and PED officials.
As soon as possible	ESC to sign off a letter of introduction for use in scheduling data collection sessions.
End of May	NECT to confirm with implementing partners that they will be able to provide the monitoring data requested by mid-June
6 June	<p>Presentation of the Inception Report Version B. Deadline for written comments from ESC and other programme stakeholders to be agreed and held to.</p> <p>Some ESC members to participate in piloting the online survey and giving feedback to the team.</p>
Month of June	ESC to offer any necessary support to complete the ethical review process and get the evaluation plan approved.
Mid-June	NECT to help ensure that all the requested monitoring data is provided by implementing partners. Support the evaluation team in the event of any data being unclear, poor quality or incomplete
End of June	PDG to share a list of the final sample of schools and other respondents and NECT to complete any outstanding contact details.
Month of July	NECT to schedule & confirm school visits for the 7 sampled schools. Remain in touch with PDG as the schedule gets confirmed, to allow travel planning.
End of July	NECT to confirm the final calendar of confirmed school visits and all contacts' names.
Month of August	NECT to provide support as needed while fieldwork is underway. ESC to respond promptly to any major challenges as and when escalated to them.

4.5 Calendar of work

As highlighted in version A of the Inception Report, a revised Delivery Schedule was agreed on for the evaluation via email correspondence in early February. The schedule presented below is the same as what was previously agreed via email correspondence with the ESC, with four changes approved by the ESC:

1. New date for delivery of Inception Report Version A (from 17 to 28 February);
2. Changed date for the theory of change workshop (new date is 8 March);
3. Removed the interim deliverable of “Theory of change and programme review (brief document)” which had been set for mid-March – to streamline ESC engagements
4. Shifting of the date for Inception Report Version B from mid-April to 20 May 2022 to allow for review of the school baseline data which is expected to become available in April

Table 9: Calendar of work

Phase	Deliverable / Milestone	Mode of delivery	Date	Invoice %
<u>Inception</u>	Schedule of deliverables and meetings	Email	04-Feb	<u>10%</u>
	Consultations as required to conduct evaluability assessment and finalise workplan	Virtual engagements	25 January to 28 February	
	Attendance of Workstreams meeting; Introductory interviews	Virtual engagements	Feb to April	
	<u>Inception Report Version A (Detailed workplan, evaluability assessment and draft evaluation matrix)</u>	<u>Submit Report + Present to Steercom</u>	<u>28-Feb</u>	
<u>TOC & Review</u>	Theory of Change workshop	Workshop (in-person, virtual or hybrid TBC)	8 March 2022	
<u>Evaluation Plan</u>	Consultations as required to finalise fieldwork & analysis plan; analysis of baseline data to inform school sampling and data collection	Email; phone	March to May	<u>20%</u>
	<u>Inception Report Version B (TOC, Programme description, Evaluation design, final fieldwork plan & instruments)</u>	<u>Submit Report + Present to Steercom</u>	<u>20 May 2022</u>	
<u>Fieldwork</u>	Conduct fieldwork, with 6-weekly progress meetings as needed	Meetings with Steercom	At the start of Q3, i.e. August	<u>30%</u>
	<u>Concise fieldwork report</u>	<u>Submit Report + Present to Steercom</u>	<u>At the latest, early Sep</u>	

Evaluation of the Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning during COVID-19 and Beyond Programme (REALS SA) – Full Inception Report

<u>Analysis & Reporting</u>	<u>Draft Report</u>	<u>Submit Report + Present to Steercom</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>20%</u>
	<u>Revised Report; opportunity for any final written comments by mid-January</u>	<u>Submit Report + Present to Steercom</u>	<u>Early December</u>	
<u>Finalisation</u>	<u>Final Report; Final Presentation, Handover of Data, Closeout meeting</u>	<u>Submit Report + Present to Steercom</u>	<u>End of January 2023</u>	<u>20%</u>
			<u>Total</u>	<u>100%</u>

5 Annexes

5.1 Evaluation TOR

See attached document titled “REALS SA Evaluation_Annexure-5.1-ToR”

5.2 Stakeholder Map

See Figure 2.

5.3 Tentative outline of the main report

The template and style guide provided by UNICEF as a comment on the first draft inception report, will be used. As requested by UNICEF, the total length of the final report, including executive summary and annexes, will be less than 80 pages.

- Title page and opening pages
To include: Name of evaluated object, timeframe of the evaluation, date of report, location of evaluated object, names and/or organization(s) of the evaluator(s), name of organization commissioning the evaluation, table of contents -including, as relevant, tables, graphs, figures, annexes; list of acronyms/abbreviations, page numbers
- Executive Summary
- Introduction
 - Background and purpose of the evaluation
 - Structure of the report
- Context and Description of the REALS SA programme
 - Context and problem statement
 - Policy and strategic relevance
 - Programme description
 - Theory of change (high level)
- Evaluation Framework and Methodology
 - Evaluation criteria and questions
 - Methodology
 - Limitations
- Findings
 - Relevance
 - Effectiveness
 - Efficiency
 - Sustainability
- Conclusions
 - Design
 - Implementation
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations
- Annexes
 - TOR
 - Brief fieldwork report

- Theory of change (detailed)
- Evaluation matrix
- Equity analysis framework
- Logical framework
- Data collection instruments
- Document list

5.4 Data collection tools and interview protocols

See attached documents titled *“REALS SA Evaluation_Annexure-5.4.1-Data Collection Tools and Interview Protocols”* and *“REALS SA Evaluation_Annexure 5.4.2 - SMT Survey”*

5.5 Ethical Declaration Form

See attached document titled *“REALS SA Evaluation_Annexure-5.5-Ethical Declaration Form”*

5.6 Evaluation Logical Framework

See attached document titled *“REALS SA Evaluation_Annexure-5.6-Logical Framework”*

5.7 Programme Theory

See section 2.4

5.8 Detailed responsibilities of evaluation team members

See Section 4.2.

5.9 Detailed Workplan

See attached document titled *“REALS SA Evaluation_Annexure-5.9-Detailed Workplan”*

5.10 Evaluation matrix

*Considering that the programme is new, there are no benchmarks yet. Indicators can be found in the logical framework

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
Design					
Relevance					
To what extent is the programme’s objectives and design responsive to beneficiaries’ needs. Is the REALS SA theory of change designed in a manner that is likely to lead to the anticipated results?	a. Is there a coherent theory of change underpinning the REALS SA project as a whole? <u>To what extent does the Programme’s intervention logic, including its goals and objectives include gender and equity considerations?</u>	Document review of programme documents Interviews with NECT & NECT stakeholders Theory of Change workshop and consultation with programme stakeholders	Thematically analyse interview transcripts using NVIVO, identifying themes and comparing convergence / divergence of views and understanding Develop a theory of change as articulated by stakeholders in the theory of change workshop as well as supporting programme documents. Assess the causal relationships, risks, and assumptions in final Theory of Change drawing on views of stakeholders and reviewed documentation. Explore and appraise the extent to which equity considerations have been explicitly incorporated. Our team’s expertise on South African education interventions will be applied to render a judgment of certain design components. This includes judgement from an equity lens.	Plausibility of assumptions in theory of change Extent to which programme design characteristics and components are in line with “what works” according to literature, evaluation team & stakeholders’ experience in the SA context, including changes in context due to COVID Coherence of programme understanding across interviewed stakeholders Extent to which the Programme’s objectives and design has been formulated to achieve equity. The extent to which the Programme’s objectives and design are inclusive of equity considerations	A Theory of Change has been developed and validated by relevant stakeholders. While no programmes have been identified as formal benchmarks, the evaluation will invite interviewees to compare the programme’s design elements with similar elements that they have encountered elsewhere.
	b. To what extent did key stakeholders in the project have a shared understanding of the programme design, purpose, and theory of change?				
	c. What are the different elements (to be identified and defined) in the interventions which are intended to be influencing change?				
	d. Which of these elements can be expected to change and improve classroom practice?				
	e. Are the assumptions underpinning the theory of change plausible, and cognisant of difference?				

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
				(mainstreaming equity considerations)	
	f. What are the implementation modalities being used in the interventions? How equity sensitive are these?	Document review of programme documents Interviews with NECT & NECT stakeholders Theory of Change Workshop and consultation with programme stakeholders Interviews with implementing partners	Thematic analysis of transcripts Document review Thematic analysis of reports Assess the causal relationships, risks, and assumptions in final Theory of Change drawing on views of stakeholders and reviewed documentation	Criteria in the equity guideline Extent to which implementation modalities are clear in documents and coherent among interviewed stakeholders Extent to which implementation modalities are aligned to “what works” according to literature, evaluation team & stakeholders’ experience in the SA context, including changes in context due to COVID	
	g. Are there any envisaged obstacles or risks to smooth implementation, and have these been sufficiently planned for?	Interviews with Implementing partners Document review of programme management and implementation reports	Thematic analysis of transcripts Document review Thematic analysis of reports	Assumption- and risk-related indicators in the log frame Of major risks identified as per judgment of design (above), portion that are acknowledged and addressed in documentation or in stakeholder interviews	It is assumed this question focuses on risks inherent in the programme design – as initially designed, as well as fundamental design shifts that occurred along the way (e.g. major changes in timeframes, official targets, governance or resourcing)

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
				(qualitative portion e.g. none, few, most)	Ongoing project implementation risks and their management will be covered under later questions
	h. Is the design uniform or customised for different schools and equity factors, bearing in mind that schools will receive language specific resources (functionality, level of engagement)?	Interviews with UNICEF and NECT stakeholders Document review of programme documents Interviews with Implementing partners	Thematic analysis of transcripts Document review Application of equity guideline as appropriate	Indicators in the log frame Degree of customisation planned for in terms of language, school type, and equity considerations (see equity guideline standards on sensitivity and resourcing). (Qualitative degree e.g. minimal, somewhat, to a large extent, given salient variation/differences in context)	
	i. To what extent might we expect the REALS SA project, if implemented as planned, to achieve its intended outcomes?	Drawing on the above methods and sources	Drawing on the above analyses	Summary of judgments from the above-mentioned questions	
	j. To what extent was gender equality, child rights and equity considerations mainstreamed within the design and implementation of the programme? Such as gender, race, ethnicity, disability, geographic location etc.	Desk review of meetings minutes. Document review of programme documents. Interviews with UNICEF and NECT. Interviews with implementing partners Focus group with task team group (DBE,	Trace the integration of equity considerations in the Theory of Change and programme design, as expressed by sources listed on the left Analyse equity considerations in programme design in relation to the REALS SA goal(s) and objectives, representation, awareness and sensitivity (level of responsiveness), resources	Indicators in the log frame All judgment criteria under Design in the Equity Analysis Guideline	

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
		NECT+ Implementing partner)			
Sustainability					
To what extent are the net benefits from the programme likely to continue?	k. What are the main cost drivers in the REALS SA design?	<p>Desk review of recent quarterly expenditure report available in August 2022.</p> <p>Document review of monitoring data from implementing partners (progress reports, workshop evaluation forms, outcome data, and self-reported assessments).</p> <p>Interviews with UNICEF, NECT, and implementing partners</p>	<p>Identify “main cost drivers” as per programme budget and expenditure to date, and determine their relationship to elements in the Theory of Change</p> <p>Identify major budget adjustments that took place in the life of the programme to date and analyse which components of the Theory of Change they related to</p>	<p>Indicators in the log frame</p> <p>Necessity and sufficiency budgets allocated to main cost driver items for achieving main programme objectives</p> <p>Appropriateness of budget allocation across programme components in light of risks identified (question g)</p> <p>Criteria on Resourcing in the equity guideline</p>	
	l. Make recommendations for an exit and sustainability plan that is inclusive and equity sensitive	<p>Synthesis of findings</p> <p>Synthesis of Recommendations workshop</p>	<p>Identify strengths for sustained outcomes and risks to sustained outcomes from the overall findings, looking at areas such as stakeholder ownership and independent implementation; resourcing requirements; policy alignment and accountability arrangements; equity dimensions.</p> <p>Make recommendations in relation to these.</p> <p>Validate and refine with stakeholders</p>	<p>Extent to which programme, as currently implemented, appears likely to generate sustainable outcomes (differentiating the judgment across workstreams)</p> <p>Recommendations themselves will be developed with criteria of relevance, feasibility, acceptability and affordability in mind</p>	<p>It is assumed that no exit or sustainability plan will have been articulated at the time of analysis; if this changes the method will change to one of constructive criticism and proposals for strengthening the plan drawing on what has come to light in the evaluation.</p>
IMPLEMENTATION					

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
Effectiveness					
<p>To what extent has the programme achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and results?</p> <p>To what extent were the REALS SA interventions implemented with fidelity?</p>	<p>m. Did all the planned elements of the REALS SA programme get implemented as planned? In other words, to what extent did each of the four workstreams mobilise the resources, conduct the activities, and produce the outputs as planned? (With a focus on training, gender and equity considerations as intended, “reach” (e.g. nr of parents listening to broadcasts; nr of SMT members who attended sessions) and the distribution of materials.)</p>	<p>Theory of Change</p> <p>Desk review of monitoring data from implementing partners</p> <p>Focus group with Circuit managers</p> <p>Interviews with UNICEF and NECT</p> <p>Interviews with implementing partners</p> <p>Focus group with Subject Advisors</p> <p>Survey with SMT</p> <p>Case study methodology:</p> <p>Document review of in-class documents</p> <p>Structured interviews with teachers</p> <p>Focus group with parents</p> <p>Focus group with the SGB</p>	<p>Overall method: Process tracing against the TOC (including detailed workstream results chains), using all available data sources such as implementation reports.</p> <p>Quantify and compare planned activities such as delivery and distribution of materials, trainings, coaching, broadcasted episodes, and frequency in use of materials, against those that occurred.</p> <p>Disaggregate output data based on gender and equity factors as well as appraise who were the key actors/ decision-makers, how were resources allocated, were activities informed by equity considerations?</p>	<p>Indicators in the log frame</p> <p>Percentage of targets achieved in relation to reach of schools and target groups, outputs generated, representation of women and girls, geographic coverage, etc.</p> <p>Regularity of repeat sessions (e.g. coaching sessions) (percentage that took place as planned vs. being postponed, cancelled or rescheduled)</p> <p>Frequency of meetings in relation to the TORs of key governance structures (e.g. more often than planned; as often as planned; not nearly as often as planned) and attendance trends (frequency of attendance from each major entity represented)</p> <p>Criteria on Implementation in the equity guideline</p>	<p>We assume that each workstream will have reached the stage of implementing with school-based stakeholders by the time we conduct data collection.</p>

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
	n. How were the initiatives received by the intended target groups (teachers, SMTs, SGBs, principals, parents, circuit managers and subject advisors, learners) and why?	Review of monitoring data from implementing partners Focus group with Task Team Interviews with implementing partners Focus group with Subject Advisors Survey with SMT Case study methodology: Document review In-depth in-class documents Structured interviews with teachers Focus group with parents Focus group with the SGB	Thematically analyse interviews transcripts using NVIVO Descriptive analysis of survey results	Indicators in the log frame xxxx	
	o. So far, to what extent has each workstream contributed to changes in the attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities of the target groups? How does this align with what was intended for each workstream?	Review of monitoring data from implementing partners Focus group with Task Team Interviews with implementing partners Focus group with Subject Advisors Survey with SMT Case study methodology:	Thematically analyse interviews transcripts and open-ended survey answers using NVIVO Process tracing against the TOC	Indicators in the log frame % change in self-assessment ratings (Assessment for Learning pre- and post-tests) Distribution of survey responses on questions related to changes in attitudes, knowledge and capabilities Strength of themes in relation to the main	At the level of behaviour change, data may be limited to (1) the impressions of stakeholders about the behaviour of others; and (2) self-reported behaviour changes.

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
		Document review of in-class documents Structured interviews with teachers Focus group with parents Focus group with the SGB		intended changes in attitudes, knowledge, capabilities. (Strong themes = prevalence of clusters of similar views/ideas; theme expressed by comparatively many respondents; multiple examples shared; sometimes volunteered without prompting). In applying this judgement criterion, distinguish between transcripts of participants themselves vs. others.	
	p. So far, what evidence is there that the initiatives have contributed to changes in the behaviour of the target groups? How does this align with what was intended for each workstream?	Desk review of monitoring data from implementing partners Focus group with Task Team Interviews with implementing partners Focus group with Subject Advisors Survey with SMT survey Case study methodology: Document review of in-class documents Structured interviews with teachers	Thematic analysis of the transcripts Process tracing against the TOC (including detailed workstream results chains), using all available data sources such as implementation reports transcripts.	Indicators in the log frame Strength of evidence on claims of changed behaviour, <i>and</i> contribution of REALS SA to observed changes (e.g. number of data types and data points per claim; balance of confirmatory vs. contradictory data points; extent to which evidence refutes the most salient alternative explanations for observed change) – ultimately, the apparent reliability of the current evidence base to support REALS SA claims	

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
		Focus group with parents Focus group with the SGB		of contributing to changed behaviour	
	q. In the short to medium term, what further evidence would help to strengthen REALS-SA decision-makers' understanding of the above changes?	Desk review of monitoring data from implementing partners	Analyse the strengths and weakness of data availability and utilisation, distinguishing between evidence strengths/gaps on implementation and evidence strengths/gaps on outcomes	Recommendations will be made so that the programme has evidence better meeting the criteria listed above for strong evidence in relation to question p.	
Relevance					
To what extent were the REALS SA programme's interventions relevant?	r. How appropriate and relevant were materials provided through REALS SA in terms of gender & equity considerations, language and level?	Desk review of monitoring data from implementing partners Interviews with implementing partners Focus group with Subject Advisors Survey with SMT Case study methodology: Document review of in-class documents Structured interviews with teachers Focus group with parents Focus group with the SGB	Compare delivered material against language preferred, differentiation between boy and girl learners, where applicable. Thematically analyse interviews transcripts using NVIVO Descriptive analysis of survey results	Indicators in the log frame Criteria in the equity guideline under Implementation Weight of quantitative (survey; feedback forms) & qualitative evidence that school-based respondents view materials as appropriate and relevant, noting differences in school contexts	

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
	s. To what extent are the REALS SA materials being used?	Interviews with Implementing partner Desk review monitoring data from implementing partners Focus group with Subject Advisors SMT survey Case study methodology: Document review of in-class documents Structured interviews with teachers Focus group with parents Focus group with the SGB	Descriptive analysis Thematic analysis of transcripts from interviews and focus groups	Indicators in the log frame By type of material, % of targeted participants / schools using the material (as reported in structured monitoring data) By type of material, strength of qualitative evidence that respondents are familiar with the materials' contents and/or the practicalities of their use	Baselines on the use of pre-existing resources are important to put these results in context, but may not be available systematically (e.g. teachers' implementation of the curriculum pre-COVID; pre-existing use of available books at the schools). The evaluation may need to rely on self-reporting here.
	t. How well are teachers implementing the trimmed curriculum and how effectively have the REALS SA interventions managed to support this? Teachers are being trained to design and develop the tools for monitoring. Were the tools designed and implementors trained?	Desk review of monitoring data from implementing partners Interviews with Implementing partners Focus group with Subject Advisors Survey with SMT Case study methodology: Document review of in-class documents Structured interviews with teachers	Thematically analyse interviews and focus groups transcripts using NVIVO Descriptive analysis of survey results	Indicators in the log frame Degree of alignment of curriculum practices (according to monitoring reports) with intended practices Percentage of teachers who have been trained; percentage of teachers reported to have developed tools (as reported in structured monitoring data) Strength of qualitative evidence that teachers (in	

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
		Focus group with parents Focus group with the SGB		case study schools) are familiar with and personal experience of implementing the training in this regard	
	u. What were the actual costs of the REALS SA project, disaggregated into the main elements? How did this compare to what was planned?	Review of Quarterly expenditure report available in August 2021 Programme Budget Desk review of Service level agreements with implementing partners Review of monitoring data from implementing partners	Comparison of the costs of the programme as designed against costs of the programme as implemented. For example, the expenditure and revised budgets. Disaggregate by workstreams	Indicators in the log frame Percentage difference between budget and expenditure on major cost drivers Percentage of expenditure so far against allocated budgets; Apparent sufficiency of remaining budgets to meet output targets and activate outcomes in the Theory of Change, differentiated by workstream	
Efficiency					
To what extent were the programme's interventions undertaken in an economic manner? This being the efficient conversion of	v. What are the lessons for improving programme implementation in the future if similar support programmes are conducted?	Synthesis of lessons for project design and implementation will be identified throughout the answering of all other questions. Application of education expertise Review of literature on implementation of Reading programmes	Expert knowledge will be weaved into the report and lessons. Thematically analyse interviews and focus groups transcripts using NVIVO. Descriptive analysis of survey results	No judgment criteria – not an evaluative question	

Questions	Sub-Questions	Data collection method and source	Analysis	Judgement Criteria	Assumptions
inputs into outputs and outcomes in a cost-effective manner.					

5.11 Sample of case study schools

Introduction

The REALS SA Evaluation will include 7 case study schools. This section describes how the schools were sampled in terms of criteria applied, limitations of the data, step by step details of sampling across each province and justification for their selection.

Criteria Applied

The stratification of the school sample for the case studies, needed to ensure the following criteria are met:

- A selection of 2 schools in LP and EC as well as 3 schools in KZN
- At least 2 districts represented across the 2 or 3 schools per province
- The distance between the sampled schools in each province is a maximum of 4 hours drive, to maximise the time available at schools.
- Final sample to include spread of quintiles and 2 special schools across all provinces.

The evaluators considered the ethical guidelines when developing the sampling strategy to ensure a representative, ethical and unbiased sample. This led to two considerations in particular. Firstly, the evaluation guideline and ethical codes emphasized including special schools. Considering that the case studies will only take place in 7 schools, there may be an over representation of special schools. However, this brings quite a uniqueness in exploring how the REALS SA programme has played out in 2 different special schools whilst the other 5 schools will still be able to bring out nuances of non-special schools. Secondly, to give effect to the principle of voluntary participation, the sampling strategy takes into consideration that the sampled schools may decline to participate. Therefore, each selected case study school has a “backup” school which was identified by the same random selection process outlined below. If it is necessary to move on to some of the “backup” schools, the overall criteria for the sample will still be met except for a possible reduction in the extent of variety in quintiles.

Limitations and characteristics which influenced the sample

The data limitations that were taken into consideration were noticeable in only 2 of the 3 provinces, namely.

Quintile data was missing for a large number of the REALS SA schools in KwaZulu-Natal (quintile data missing for 111 schools) and Limpopo (quintile data missing for all districts except Capricorn South). These schools remained eligible for sampling, but because it is not possible to quantify the proportional composition of quintiles across REALS SA schools as a whole, it was not possible to ensure that the sample of 7 schools reflects the quintile distribution of the REALS SA schools. As a result, the sample criteria includes a “spread of quintiles”.

KwaZulu Natal

In KZN there are various data quality issues with the school list which includes the 111 schools without quintile data mentioned above. In addition, 5 schools had no school names or EMIS numbers. These were dropped from the list before sampling.

It should also be noted (although not a limitation of the data) that there is only 1 special school among the participating schools in KZN, and therefore the evaluators were unable to sample an alternative special school. This means, if the sampled special school in KZN is unwilling to participate in the evaluation, another special school will not be sampled. A different backup school has been chosen from the has been chosen from the list of schools. .

Limpopo

In Limpopo the school list is not segmented by quintiles except for the Capricorn South District. In addition, NECT indicated and subsequently provided data to confirm that among the participating schools, Sepedi is the primary home language in about 69% of the schools, Xitsonga is 14%, Tshivenda 13% and the rest is distributed between Setswana and other languages. Given that a large majority of the schools in the intervention are Sepedi speaking, the sample was drawn from the two districts where Sepedi is most dominant, i.e. Capricorn South, Mogalakwena and Sekhukhune South. Similarly to KZN, there is only one special school in Limpopo participating in REALS SA. If this school is unavailable to partake in the evaluation, the back up school will not be a special school.

Procedures

The following procedures were followed for each of the 3 provinces:

Step 1: Compiled the school list database for each province in one workbook.

Step 2: The special schools from all provinces were extracted and placed in a single workbook.

Step 3: For each province list and for the special school list, each school was assigned a random number to each school (using the RAND() function in Excel) and sorted the schools from the smallest to largest random number. In this way they were “ranked” for sampling, i.e. rank 1 was the school with the lowest random number.

Step 4: Two special schools were randomly selected. Although there were some Eastern Cape special schools on the list, the one KwaZulu-Natal special school and the one Limpopo special school were highest ranked and were thus selected.

Step 3: After completing the randomization, for each province, the first-ranked school was selected as the first case study school (Case study A). Where a special school had already been selected, this first-ranked school’s details were checked to ensure that the district was not the same as the special school and it was not more than 4 hours’ drive from the special school. If one of these criteria was not met, the next ranked school was considered, and so on, until arriving at the first school that met these criteria.

Step 4: The backup option was selected by moving down the list to the next ranked school that meets the criteria of being in a different district but within 4 hours drive of the already selected school.

Step 5: The process was repeated to sample the rest of the schools in each province, factoring in the already selected schools in terms of district and quintile.

Following this method, a sample of 7 schools was arrived at which has the following characteristics:

Criterion	Number of schools in sample
Special school	2
Quintile 1	3
Quintile 2	1
Quintile 3	1

Should it be necessary to revert to some of the backup schools, the overall criteria will still be met except that there may be less variety in terms of special schools and the spread of quintiles.

Sampled schools and backup schools

Province	School	District	Circuit	Quintile	Comments
Eastern Cape	East Upper Qombolo S.P.S.	Chris Hani East	Laphumilanga	1	Case study A
	Nonkunzi SP	Chris Hani West	Lady Frere	2	Back up to case study A
	Emangquzu JSS	OR Tambo Coastal	Hlwahlwazi	1	Case Study B
	Zibi Meyer SPS	Alfred Nzo West	Zitmthuma	1	Back up to case study B
KwaZulu Natal	Powerscourt Primary	Umngungundlovu	Mid-Illovo	1	Case study: A
	Sabokwe Primary	King Cetshwayo	Ntambanana	3	Back up to case study A
	Elomoya Primary	King Cetshwayo	N/A	2	Case study: B
	Zicabangele Primary	Zululand	Dumbe	1	Back up to case study B
	Indaleni Deaf School	Umngungundlovu	Richmond	0	Case study C
	Matshekazi Primary School	Zululand	Dumbe	2	Back up to special case study C

Limpopo	Ithuteng	Mogalakwena	Mahwelereng	3	Case study: A
	Maijane	Capricorn South	Mphahlele	1	Back up to case study A
	Helen Franz	Capricorn North	Bochum West	0	Case study B
	Thaduku	Capricorn South	Lepelle	1	Back up to special case study B

Note: Quintile 0 schools are commonly referred to as special schools

5.12 Equity Analysis Framework¹⁷

ERLS: Equity Analysis Guideline

18 May 2022

Purpose

The Equity Analysis Guideline is intended to provide an *equity-focused* lens to the evaluation questions, but in the main, to analyse the evaluation findings of the Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning during COVID-19 and Beyond (REALS SA) Programme. The Guideline begins with a definition of *What is Equity* and thereafter proposes criteria for equity considerations in the planning and implementation of the evaluation and arriving at findings. The criteria will be used by the evaluation team to guide and inform their data collection from an equity perspective. Through this, the team will be able to evaluate the extent to which equity considerations have been mainstreamed in the planning and implementation of REALS SA (reference: key evaluation question j).

What is Equity?

“Equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop, and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favouritism.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Please note that formatting may be different on separate, standalone guideline

¹⁸ Bamberger M and Segone M (2011) How to design and manage Equity-focused evaluations, UNICEF Evaluation Office. Accessed at: http://mymande.org/sites/default/files/EWP5_Equity_focused_evaluations.pdf

Equity is understood as the goal towards eliminating the unfair and avoidable circumstances that deprive and prevent access to the realisation of rights regardless of **gender, race, religious beliefs, income, physical attributes, geographical location, environment, and/or other related and relevant status**. Programmes and projects with an equity focus aim to prioritise less fortunate, underprivileged, and systematically disadvantaged groups.

This document will guide the evaluation to appraise and judge the extent to which the Programme has factored in achieving equitable results.

Equity-focused criteria

The proposed equity-focused criteria consider gender, human rights (access, race, religious beliefs), and social inclusion (income, physical attributes, geographical location) and the environment. For the purposes of the evaluation, the equity criteria are categorised in these four broad categories.

The table below proposes a rating scale with **4 levels** for assessing the equity criteria, these are:

1. **Equity-blind:** Ignoring the relevance of equity dimensions; failure to recognise the existing differences in gender, human rights-related attributes or that related to aspects of social inclusion and the environment.
2. **Equity-neutral:** There is no apparent association to the inclusion or exclusion of gender, human rights, social inclusion, or environmental dimensions.
3. **Equity-sensitive:** There is evidence of equity dimensions having been considered in the Programme planning and design to implementation.
4. **Equity-positive:** The focus is on Programme outcomes with a clear focus on the inclusion of equity dimensions that seed (and may realise) transformative change.

For each criterion a rating ranging from “Equity-blind” (colour coded RED) to “Equity-positive” (colour coded GREEN) will be applied.

The equity-focused criteria provide clear points of reference in relation to the extent to which equity considerations have been included in the design and implementation of the REALS SA Programme.

Proposed Equity Criteria

Criteria	Scale			
	Equity-blind	Equity-neutral – minimum standards	Equity-sensitive – empowerment	Equity positive – transformative change
Programme design				
Clearly specified goal(s) and objectives				
The extent to which the Programme’s objectives and design has been formulated to achieve equity				
The extent to which the Programme’s objectives and design are inclusive of				

Evaluation of the Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning during COVID-19 and Beyond Programme (REALS SA) – Full Inception Report

Criteria	Scale			
	Equity-blind	Equity-neutral – minimum standards	Equity-sensitive – empowerment	Equity positive – transformative change
equity considerations (mainstreaming equity considerations)				
<i>Representation</i>				
The extent to which key stakeholders in the Programme are representative of equity-focused demographics, i.e., women, low income and marginalised groups, diverse religious and racial groups, human rights-based and environment organisations, among others				
Influence of equity considerations in determining the target population of the Programme				
<i>Awareness and sensitivity, i.e., level of responsiveness</i>				
To what extent were the Programme interventions designed to influence change?				
Were they designed to increase sensitivity to equity considerations?				
Did the Programme design differentiate for equity considerations in the selection of schools for REALS SA?				
<i>Resources</i>				
Did the Programme planning, and design allocate resources for groups considered “worst off” by equity standards?				
<i>Implementation</i>				
<i>Analysing conditions to understand implementation in relation to equity considerations</i>				
The extent to which implementation of the Programme in each of the four workstreams has been inclusive of equity considerations				
Were the materials developed appropriate and relevant to equity dimensions?				
To what extent are the Programme outputs reflective of equity considerations?				
<i>Influence and decision-making</i>				
The extent to which equity concerns were taken up and/or incorporated in the decisions by the education				

Criteria	Scale			
	Equity-blind	Equity-neutral – minimum standards	Equity-sensitive – empowerment	Equity positive – transformative change
authorities or school management structures				

5.13 References

Amadio, M., Opertti, R. & Tedesco, J.C. 2014. A Curriculum for the 21st Century: challenges, tensions and open issues. *Research and Foresight in Education*. ERF Working Papers (9):1–5.

Bush, T. & Glover, D. 2016. School Leadership and Management in South Africa: Findings from a Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 30(2):27.

Cambridge University. 2017. *Getting started with assessment for learning*. Available: <https://cambridge-community.org.uk/professional-development/gswafl/index.html> [2022, May 05].

COGTA & UNDP South Africa. 2020. *COVID-19 in South Africa: Socio-economic Impact Assessment*.

Department of Basic Education. 2020. *Action plan to 2019: towards the realisation of Schooling 2030*. Available: <http://www.education.gov.za>.

Department of Basic Education. 2021. *Annual Report 2020-2021*. Available: [https://msme.gov.in/sites/default/files/MSME-ANNUAL-REPORT-ENGLISH 2020-21.pdf](https://msme.gov.in/sites/default/files/MSME-ANNUAL-REPORT-ENGLISH%2020-21.pdf).

Department of Education. 2006. Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding. *Government Gazette*. 29179.

van Dyk, H. & White, C.J. 2019. Theory and practice of the quintile ranking of schools in South Africa: A financial management perspective. *South African Journal of Education*. 39(9):1–9. DOI: 10.15700/saje.v39ns1a1820.

European Commission. 2018. *Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the Republic of South Africa: Education for Employability (E4E)*.

Ferguson, H., Bovaird, S. & Mueller, M. 2007. The impact of poverty on educational outcomes for children. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. 12(8):701–706.

Graham, J. & Kelly, S. 2019. How effective are early grade reading interventions? A review of the evidence. *Educational Research Review*. 27(January):155–175. DOI: 10.1016/j.edurev.2019.03.006.

Help2Read. 2022. *The Literacy Crisis*. Available: <https://help2read.org/the-literacy-crisis> [2022, February 16].

Meiklejohn, C., Westaway, L., Westaway, A.F.H. & Long, K.A. 2021. A review of South African primary school literacy interventions from 2005 to 2020. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*. 11(1):1–11. DOI: 10.4102/sajce.v11i1.919.

Evaluation of the Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning during COVID-19 and Beyond Programme (REALS SA) – Full Inception Report

Perotta, C. & Whitelock, D. 2017. Assessment for learning. *Technology Enhanced Learning: Research Themes*. 127–135. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-02600-8_12.

Pont, B., Nusche, D. & Moorma, H. 2008. *Improving School Leadership*.

Spaull, N. & Draper, K. 2015. *Examining oral reading fluency among rural Grade 5 English Second Language (ESL) learners in South Africa: An analysis of NEEDU 2013*.

Taylor, S. & Yu, D. 2009. *The importance of socio-economic status in determining educational achievement in South Africa*. Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers (01/09).

UNICEF. 2021a. *Terms of Reference for Institutional Contract: Evaluation of the Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning During Covid-19 and Beyond Programme (REALS SA)*.

UNICEF. 2021b. *Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South Africa Beyond Schools for Learning During Covid-19 and Beyond (REALS SA): Description of Action*.

UNICEF. 2022. *UNICEF South Africa*. Available: <https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/education>.

United Nations South Africa. 2020. *Emergency Appeal for the Impact of Covid-19: South Africa*.

5.14 Document map

Author(s)	Title	Year of publication	Summary
Literature			
Govender & Hugo	An analysis of the results of literacy assessments conducted in South African primary schools	2020.07.22	This article highlights the importance of obtaining reliable information in determining literacy levels in the country and in informing decisions regarding literacy-related policies. According to the findings, most literacy examinations are designed for Intermediate Phase students (Grades 4–6) and are not available in all 11 South African official languages. There are currently no large-scale literacy examinations for Learners in phase one (Grades 1–3). Furthermore, the outcomes of these examinations do not supply us with any information as there are large disparities in literacy levels across the country, trustworthy information concerning literacy levels in the country is difficult to obtain.
Chetty	Literacy teaching in disadvantaged South African schools	2019	The experiences of literacy teachers working in underserved communities in the Western Cape, South Africa, are examined in this study. The aim was to give teachers in under-resourced schools in economically depressed areas a chance to talk about their experiences teaching reading. The paper is based on an empirical investigation with a sample of ten teachers that included interviews and classroom observation. An interpretive analysis followed a descriptive presentation of the observation data.
Zuma, Boodhoo, Louw-Potgieter	Measuring the outcomes of a literacy programme in no-fee schools in Cape Town	2019	Two evaluation questions were addressed in this outcome evaluation of Living through Learning's (LTL) class-based English medium Coronation Reading Adventure Room program: whether Grade 1 learners who participated in the program met LTL and Department of Basic Education (DBE) literacy standards at the end of the program, and whether teacher attributes contributed to this improvement.

Meiklejohn, Westaway & Long	A review of South African primary school literacy interventions from 2005 to 2020	2021	This evaluation examines the scope and types of primary school literacy interventions implemented in South Africa during the previous 15 years. An examination of some of the most important findings about the impact of various interventions is presented.
OXFORD	Using formative assessment to improve learning and teaching: Strategies and techniques for enhancing classroom practise	2020	The purpose of this booklet is to provide a practical and user-friendly introduction to help instructors execute the Department of Basic Education's guidelines on the use of formative assessment. It will assist teachers in improving their class planning, preparation, and presentation; identifying what students know, understand, and can do; and providing better support to all students in meeting their learning requirements.
Programme Documentation			
European Union	Germany Financing Education Employability	2018.02.14	Financing agreement sector reform contract between the EU and South Africa to help the government improve the quality of basic education, vocational training and job placement services, from early childhood, through teen-years until the acquisition of skills needed for the world of work.
COGTA, UNDP SA	COVID-19 in South Africa- socio-economic impact assessment	2020	This study employs three complimentary techniques to produce robust data that represent the realities on the ground in South Africa as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.
Department of Basic Education	Delegates to KZN advocacy meeting	2021.11.23	Contact details of NECT and KZN delegates including district officials that will attend the advocacy meeting.
	KZN Reals SA advocacy participants list	2021.09.27	
	Report on advocacy and planning in KZN	2022.02.11	A list of officials who were requested to attend the REALS-SA virtual meeting on 28 Sept 2021. High level overview of the face-to-face advocacy event that took place early December in KZN.
	Summary of database of provincial officials	2022.01.17	Overview on the number of provincial officials
	Reals SA overview	2022.01.21	Overview of REALS SA, detailing the purpose, outputs, target groups, project stakeholders,

			sub-programmes and their activities as well as next steps
	Reals SA reporting template Service provider reporting template: curriculum recovery programme	2022.02.03	Highlights supporting activities that will be undertaken by the service provider (UKZN research team) and progress on activities for which stakeholders under particular timelines.
	KZN Reals SA schools Limpopo Reals SA schools	2022.02.11	Overview of beneficiary schools in KZN and Limpopo.
Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	DPME Evaluation Guideline No 2.2.12 Guideline on Implementation Evaluation	2014	The Guideline provides a definition and description of implementation evaluation, key questions that should be addressed, methodologies, and issues to be considered in managing implementation evaluations.
	DPME Evaluation Guideline No 2.2.11 Guideline on Design Evaluation	2014	The Guideline includes a definition and description of design evaluation, as well as key issues to consider and a methodology framework. It is intended to offer an overview for government personnel doing design evaluations and is not intended to serve as a guidebook for evaluators on how to conduct design evaluations; rather, training will provide further detail on how to conduct the evaluation.
University of KwaZulu-Natal	Draft 2 QA framework for implementation of trimmed curriculum	2022.02.17	Overview of the draft quality assurance framework to assess the trimmed curriculum. The framework focuses on 5 areas (knowledge and understanding of the trimmed curriculum; school context for implementing the trimmed curriculum; delivery of the trimmed curriculum; review of the implementation of the trimmed curriculum; leadership and management) and various standards across each focus area.
	Curriculum recovery project presentation to the technical team	2021.10.22	Presentation by Prof Ramrathan from UKZN for the curriculum recovery plan, framework for monitoring and tracking the implementation of the trimmed curriculum and researching the implementation of the trimmed curriculum.
United Nations'	Terms of Reference for institutional contract	2021	This document details the TOR for the project with the service provider for undertaking the evaluation of the REALS SA programme

Children Fund	GEROS Handbook (incl. summary)	2022.01.17	The guide aids in the establishment of a uniform standard and degree of expectation regarding the GEROS process and evaluation quality assessment amongst UNICEF staff and the independent GEROS assessment team. The Handbook may also be useful to evaluators as a clear statement of UNICEF expectations for a solid evaluation report.
	Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report - Standards	2022.02.10	The report provides a clear and comprehensive statement of the evaluation's goal. The evaluation's aim, goals, and scope are all clearly stated. The report provides a transparent account of the evaluation's concept and procedures, demonstrating how the evaluation addresses evaluation criteria, gives responses to evaluation questions, and accomplishes assessment goals.
	Policy on conduct promoting the protection and safeguarding of children	2022.02.10	This document provides step-by-step instructions for incorporating the conduct for promoting the protection and safeguarding of children into the review process. The UNEG's attempts to provide a practical tool for evaluators, evaluation managers, and program managers both within and outside the UN system resulted in the publication of the Handbook. This policy applies to both UNICEF employees and non-employees. It also applies to UNICEF-hired individual consultants. This policy applies to both UNICEF employees and non-employees. It also applies to UNICEF's individual consultants.
	HRGE Handbook	2022.02.14	Provides step-by-step instructions for incorporating human rights and gender equality factors into the review process. The UNEG's attempts to provide a practical tool for evaluators, evaluation managers, and program managers both within and outside the UN system resulted in the publication of the Handbook.
	Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation	2022.02.15	This document provides four ethical principles for evaluation; tailored guidelines for governing leaders and governing bodies, evaluation organizers and evaluation practitioners; and a detachable Pledge of Commitment to Ethical Conduct in Evaluation that all those involved in evaluations should discuss and may sign.

	Evaluability Assessments Guidance	2022.02.09	The note defines evaluability and specifies when, how, and by whom an evaluability assessment should be conducted. The guidance contains a complete list of internal and external resources, as well as links to selected UNICEF evaluability assessment best practice examples. Finally, the guidelines contain a checklist to ensure that the program is well-designed.
National Education Collaboration Trust	REALS SA Leadership & management materials on leading for reading- Principals and Deputies	2022	A workshop manual for the respective stakeholders to guide them on the programme and the respective sub-programmes, how to manage resources, support reading in the classroom, curriculum coverage and implementation tracking, planning and supporting parent reading projects. In addition, the manual provides various activities for principals and deputies to implement in their schools. Upon successful completion of implementing activities mentioned in the module, delegates will receive a certificate of competence
	Reals SA implementation plan for 2022	2022	The document outlines each sub-programme namely, reading recovery, curriculum recovery, Assessment for learning and leadership & management activities, timelines and technical team members responsible.
	Review template of ATPs of trimmed curriculum draft	2021.11.02	The document outlines the areas of review for the trimmed curriculum, their implications and how to manage them.
	Primary School Teacher guidelines draft	2021.11.11	Draft document of teacher guidelines that will be printed and distributed to teachers to use as a support mechanism in implementing the reading recovery strategies
	NECT DIP ToC & Logic models	2021.09.14	This report provides a brief overview of the programme, followed by a detailed programme logic which details key outputs for curriculum recovery and unpacks immediate outcomes, potential risk factors, possible integration with other stakeholders and key activities to be performed.
	SMT guidelines for managing resources draft v3	2021.11.11	Draft document of SMT guidelines that will be printed and distributed to officials to use as a support mechanism in delivering an efficient resource managing system, specifically focusing on receipt of resources, accession of resources, storage, maintenance and

			circulation of resources across classes withing grades.
REALS-SA Curriculum technical team meeting	2021.03.02 2021.05.18 2022.02.03		Update on the curriculum consultant, readiness of the reading recovery provincial champs for the remaining technical teams, presentation of the REALS programme to the Chief Directors Forum, the DBE and NECT requirements in documenting and archiving the processes of this programme for posterity.
Resilient School Leadership in Times of Crisis REALS SA	2022.02.16		This report follows a manual structure, where delegates are expected to complete a module comprising of various activities that are expected to lead to delegates understanding different concepts of situational leadership and how to apply different styles of leadership when they are required
Reals SA update reports	2021.08.13 2021.11.26 2021.12.15 2022.01.28 2021.10.29 2021.12.03 2021.10.26 2022.03.07 2022.03.04 2022.03.11 2022.03.18 2022.03.25		Project updates on all the sub-programmes including what activities have been completed, progress on activities in the pipeline, and next steps
Empangeni REALS SA- KZN Advocacy delegates	2021.12.07		A list of REALS SA NECT team members contact details for advocacy in KZN.
Reals SA TT meeting agenda reading recovery- reading recovery	2022.02.17		Team updates on the said sub-programme, progress report
Reals SA update meeting agenda	2022.01.14 2022.02.04		Team updates on the various sub-programmes progress and next steps. Only the meeting agendas have been provided.
REAL SA Programme Remote planning, performance, leadership & management-District officials	2022.02.16		A workshop manual for the respective stakeholders to guide them on the programme and the respective sub-programme (leadership & management), how to improve system accountability, reach and support to schools during times of crisis when physical contact is not always possible,

			through the development of tracking tools at district levels.
	Circular on REALS SA Advocacy Eastern Cape	2022.01.11	Circular to conduct face to face advocacy in the Eastern Cape for the REALS SA project.
	Leadership & management TT meeting	2022.02.23	Progress updates on the sub-programme
	Parent guidelines 1 reading at home	2022.02.14	The document illustrates the features for the parents' guideline to help learners with reading. The content mainly focuses around the meaning and importance of reading.
	REALS SA update meeting REALS SA Update report REALS SA Update report	2021.09.17 2022.01.28 2022.02.25	An overview of proposed activities by programme sub-group and, targets and reporting timelines.
	Parent guidelines 2 reading at home	2022.02.14	The document illustrates the features for the 2nd parents' guideline to help their children with reading. The 2nd edition focuses on supporting reading at home with links to available reading resources online.
	REALS SA April to July 2021 Report REALS SA August to October 2021 Report	2021.09.30 2021.11.30	The report summarises the rationale of the REALS SA project, programme design and explores the theory of change used for the programme which highlights four change levers: provision of reading books and radio programmes; use of framework and tools for curriculum monitoring and support; use of assessment for learning practices and; capacity building of districts, SMTs, SGBs and parents to support learning. These change levers would lead to increased access and use of reading resources, sustainable support for learning and curriculum catch-up, as well as leadership and management. Moreover, the report details how the selection of schools was undertaken, budgetary allocations to the programme and achievements obtained thus far.
	Proposed radio content	2022.02.15	An overview of proposed radio content for children and teachers across 24 episodes.

Evaluation of the Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for Learning during COVID-19 and Beyond Programme (REALS SA) – Full Inception Report

Reals-SA Project overview Dec Action	2022.02.07	Outlines project objectives, expected outputs, budget, target groups, final beneficiaries of the project and the main areas of intervention.
Final advocacy reading and leadership strengthening in South Africa	2022.02.07	Letterhead template to invite stakeholders to the reading and leadership strengthening in SA
Final programme of REALS SA LP Advocacy and Planning	2022.02.07	Agenda detailing the activities, duration, and person responsible for facilitating the REALS SA advocacy in Limpopo
Final Reals SA Technical teams TT management plan Final Reals SA technical teams	2022.02.08 2022.02.07 2022.02.11	Documents the contact details and from which institution and province technical team members are located.
Reals SA high level plan	2022.02.11	Overview of various intervention to be implemented over a specific timeframe against particular target groups.
TT & PMT Plan schedule of meetings for 2022	2022.02.11	Overview of prospective technical team meetings for the various sub-programmes through the year.
NECT UNICEF Agreement- Annex C Programme Document	2021.04.21	Programme document contract between NECT and UNICEF for implementing the REALS-SA programme.
NECT UNICEF Evaluation PD amendment_150921	2021.09.16	Programme document amendment form that highlights a budgetary amendment of less than and equal to 20% of the previously approved contribution with or without changes of the programme results.
NECT PSA REALS-SA LM Service Level Agreement 2021	2021.11.19	Service agreement contract between NECT and PSA
NECT TUT AfL Service Level Agreement 2021	2021.08.05	Service agreement contract between NECT and TUT for the AfL sub-programme
NECT UKZN Curriculum Recovery Service Level Agreement 2021	2021.11.19	Cooperation agreement contract between the service provider and NECT

	TUT Reals Project Team_ Contract summary	2021.08.12	Contract request summary between the service provider and NECT
	Governance & Management Structure		Overview of the REALS SA governance and management structure which highlights the committees' roles and responsibilities.
	UNICEF (EU funded) budget Annexure 3b_Results matrix REALS Project (NECT)	2021.05.05	Spreadsheet detailing financial indicators for the overall programme and subprogrammes, targets for 2021 and 2022,
	Reals SA Management Plan	2021.09.10	A spreadsheet outlining the programmes workplan together with timelines
	EU-Reals SA Financial Report Jan 2022	2022	A spreadsheet detailing January 2022 financial report and results matrix
	Budget showing removed items in red		A spreadsheet detailing budgeted items that have been removed in red
	Eastern Cape REAL SA Schools	2021	Spreadsheet outlining which schools have been selected in the Eastern Cape
Palmer Development Group	REALS SA Regular meeting with Gaza	2022.04.08	Weekly check-in minutes with Gaza on programme updates and any additional concerns or questions we would like to raise
Performance Solutions Africa	PSA Mini Guidelines	2022	School functionality report for baseline assessments by PSA, an interim progress report.

5.15 Evidence of Ethical Review board approval

Once received, this will be annexed as a separate document titled “REALS SA Evaluation_Annexure-5.15-Ethical Approval” .

