



FIRST READ

“ENHANCING EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS”



As part of our ‘Advancing the Right to Read’ initiative, Save the Children is introducing **First Read**, a new programme focusing on developing emergent literacy skills in children aged 0-6. This programme is being implemented in partnership with a local community based organisation, Umuhuza. **First Read** will complement Umuhuza’s existing early childhood parenting programme in Ngororero District.

THE SITUATION FOR CHILDREN IN RWANDA

Literacy acquisition, the process of becoming a reader, begins in the earliest stages of a child’s life. This period when children are not yet reading and writing but are learning the skills and tools they need to read and write, is called emergent literacy.

If begun early enough, high-quality early childhood interventions can improve child development and better prepare children for school. Even very young babies are learning about language, both written and spoken, each day of their lives. Infants make sounds like “babababa” that show how they are making connections between what they hear and the sounds their mouths can make. Toddlers can recognise labels on food boxes and other symbols. This is all part of emergent literacy. Most children growing up in Rwanda, however, fail to develop these skills at home and are not exposed to any structured early childhood care and development. As a result children begin school ill prepared to learn, which consequently affects their ability to reach their full potential.

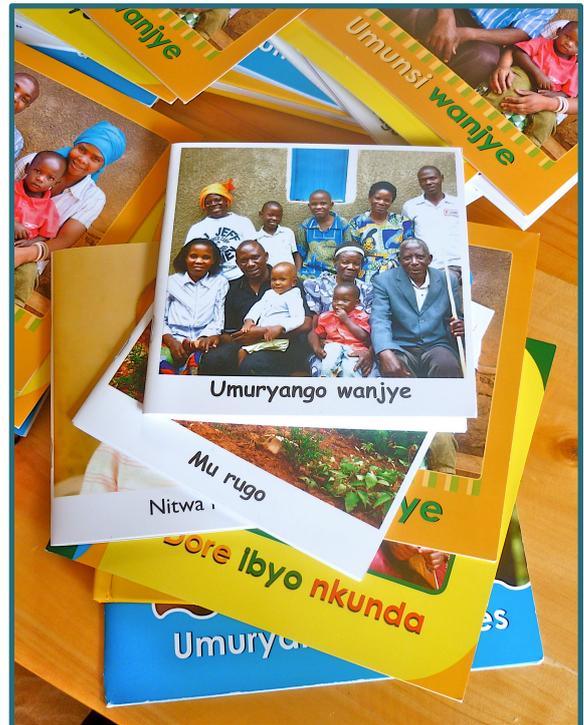


First Read will support and teach parents emergent literacy practices through parenting trainings / meetings and home visits, with the goal of increasing children’s emergent literacy skills (0-3) and school readiness (3-6).

In 2014, the project is targeting 1,200 children between the ages of 0 to 6 in Ngororero and Muhororo Sectors, located in Ngororero District in the West province of Rwanda.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Developing a holistic parenting education curriculum (for parents of children ages 0 to 3 years and a complementary curriculum for parents of children ages 3 to 6 years);
- Helping parents/carers acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to support the development of their children's emergent literacy skills at home;
- Supporting local commercial publishers to produce high quality, age appropriate children's books to be given to families with children aged 0 – 6, including those participating in the project;
- Promoting a culture of reading and ensuring access to reading materials in rural areas, for example, by setting up community libraries supplied with age-appropriate books;
- Improving the awareness in the community and among local and national authorities on the importance of early childhood development and emergent literacy within parenting education;
- Establishing a strong evaluation system to assess the project's effectiveness and to develop a strong evidence-base for the First Read approach.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Umuhuza and Save the Children's partnership offers a truly innovative and scalable model of family learning with emphasis on emergent literacy but offers the building block for a comprehensive and holistic approach to supporting children's early development.

Expected outcomes of **First Read** are:

Outcome 1: High quality, age appropriate, Kinyarwanda books for children aged 0 - 6 are available and accessible;

Outcome 2: The home literate environment is improved, promoting children's emergent literacy skills development;

Outcome 3: Parenting practices are improved in support of children's early childhood development and emergent literacy skills;

Outcome 4: Collective action is taken by families to provide opportunities for their young children's learning;

Outcome 5: A holistic parenting education model that can be adopted by Government is developed.