



## RWANDAN CHILDREN’S BOOK INITIATIVE (RCBI) EVALUATION RESULTS, May 2015

### ABOUT RCBI:

Save the Children’s Rwanda Children’s Book Initiative (RCBI) vision is to get ‘more children reading more and better books’. RCBI developed a unique, whole-system approach to addressing the Kinyarwanda children’s book gap. The program has supported a self-sustainable industry for good quality, non-textbook, children’s reading materials, in addition to providing classroom book collections to P1- P3 classrooms.



### RCBI EVALUATION TIMELINE:

A baseline was conducted in May 2013. The endline was carried out on both the national level and school level in March 2015.

### THE SAMPLING:

On the school level, the endline was carried out across 1 treatment group (26 primary schools in Burera) and 1 control group (26 primary schools in Rubavu). Data was collected from 1,248 students, 94 teachers and 52 head teachers. The national level assessment considered data from 19 book sector actors. To measure quality & range of books, the assessment analyzed 50 Kinyarwanda children’s books.

### PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

- 1) How do teaching practices influence students’ reading habits & skills?
- 2) How does accessibility to storybooks & teaching practices impact students’ reading habits & skills?



### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE ENDLINE

We found that on the national level, the RCBI project resulted in:

- The publication of 47 Kinyarwanda children’s books of superior quality to existing titles on the market prior to RCBI
- Local publishers, illustrators & authors have built the skills and knowledge to develop appropriate books for young readers

We found that on the school level, the RCBI project resulted in:

- Significant increases in children’s frequency of reading storybooks in schools and at home.
- A substantially higher percentage of P1-P3 teachers including reading activities in lessons
- P2 & P3 students had higher average reading skill scores
- P3 Children displayed better writing skills

This tells us that:

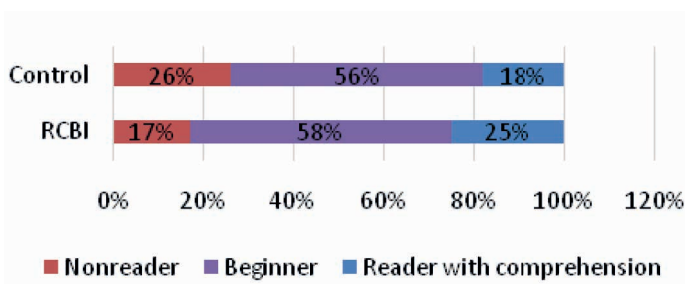
- The presence of Kinyarwanda storybooks in a classroom contributes to P2 & P3 students reading & writing skills development
- It is essential that young children have regular access to Kinyarwanda books in order to improve reading skills & develop reading habits
- Reading at home is a powerful influencer of a child’s reading development
- Minimalist training on book use can improve teachers’ abilities to explicitly teach reading



### INSTRUMENTS

A diverse battery of instruments was used to measure RCBI’s impact. On the school level, the tools included the teacher, student, and head teacher surveys used at baseline. Additionally, a classroom observation tool was adapted from the Bhutan Children’s Book Initiative as well as a student reading assessment adapted from the Literacy Boost tools developed by Stanford University. In order to compare range & quality of books, the Rwanda Education Board’s Book Evaluation tool was used. All data was collected by independent researchers.

**Figure 1.** Percentage of children at not reading, decoding and reading with comprehension



**Figure 1** shows a comparison of reading abilities of children in control and RCBI areas. There were significantly more children in the RCBI group reading with comprehension or at a beginning level (9%). There was no data collected on reading abilities at baseline, however, considering RCBI area has a significantly lower SES than the control area, it is likely that the learning gains in RCBI groups may actually constitute an even higher percent than indicated by the data.

**Figure 2.** Percent of children observed reading books (other than a textbook) at school

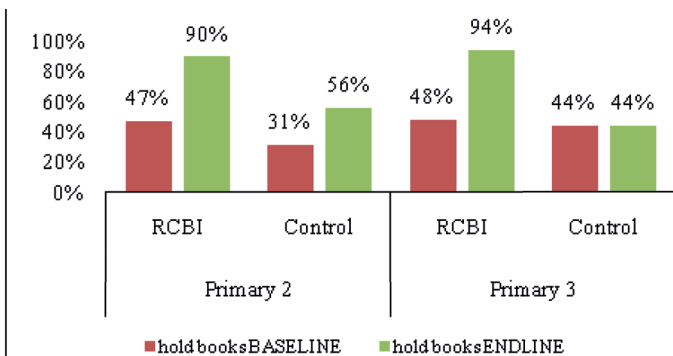
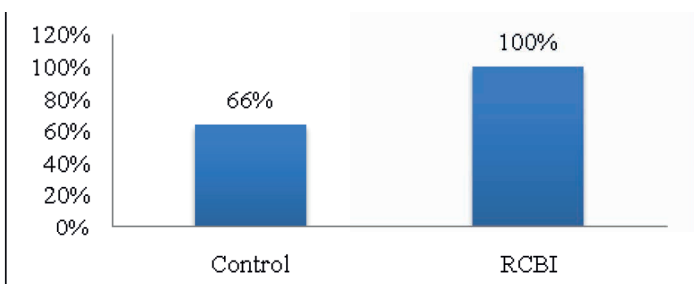


Figure 2 displays gains in children’s access to non-textbook reading materials in the classroom, as observed at baseline and endline in both RCBI and control areas. In the RCBI group, there were significant increases from baseline, with 46% more children in P3 and 43% more children observed holding and reading books during a Kinyarwanda reading lessons. This indicates a sharp increase in the frequency of authentic reading activities occurring during Kinyarwanda reading lessons in RCBI areas.

**Figure 3.** Percentage of classrooms observed where reading lessons included reading activities



**Figure 3** shows the percentage of Kinyarwanda P2 & P3 classrooms in RCBI & control areas where observed reading lessons (as determined by class teachers) involved any reading activities. In the control group, 66% of the lessons involved reading, with the remaining 34% of lessons observed not including any reading activities. In RCBI observed classrooms, 100% of the lessons observed included reading activities, the majority of which were either independent reading, read aloud or group reading of storybooks.